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STUDIES IN RELIGION

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LONDON
THE EPWORTH PRESS
J. ALFRED SHARP

First Edition, 1929

*Printed in Great Britain by*
*Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury.*

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# I

# THE APPROACH TO DOGMA

The man who demands a reality more solid than that of the religious consciousness knows not what he seeks.

F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 449.

# I

## THE APPROACH TO DOGMA

Our particular generation has a singular dislike for religious dogma. This distaste shows itself in many ways. It is often manifest in newspapers and in novels ; in fact, it seems to be peculiarly characteristic of the minds of journalists and of the smaller fry of literature generally. It is illustrated by the insolence of Mr. Arnold Bennett's remark that he cannot believe that any one who accepts a system of dogma in these days is possessed of a first-class intellectual apparatus —the spectacle of a third-rate novelist dismissing in that fashion the whole intelligence of the Christian Church would be comic if it were not rather disgusting. But the ignorant candour of the remark probably illustrates the real opinion of a majority of the minor *intelligentsia*.

From another angle the dislike of dogma is illustrated by the pathetic attempts of various people to propagate an undogmatic Christianity, apparently without any suspicion of the obvious fact that such a thing is a contradiction in terms. If you are a Christian in any sense at all, however remote, you are naturally a dogmatist to that extent. If all that you retain of Christian conviction is a faint preference for Christianity instead of Buddhism or any other religion, that preference has only to be reduced to a logical state-

ment, and expressed in an authoritative way, to be a dogma.

There are probably several reasons for the general dislike of dogma. One is undoubtedly the curious cultus of vagueness which has invaded a good deal of modern religiosity. Many people prefer large, loose, sentimental language that does not necessarily mean much, to direct, terse, unequivocal statements of belief. The enormous vogue of flabby, incoherent books of the type associated with the New Thought movement in America is an example of this. Hosts of people evidently like to move in a luminous mist of what seems to be religion, without committing themselves to anything definite either in religious thought or in spiritual allegiance. This type of mind shrinks from anything distinct and positive ultimately because it shirks the trouble of thinking and the responsibility of deciding.

There is another reason for this dislike and distrust of dogma which is deserving of much greater respect. For there is an almost instinctive revolt against what may be called the scholasticism of theology in the past, because of the way that it seemed to proffer a hard, exact, final formula for the most exalted and the most mysterious truths of religion. There is a deep and salutary feeling in the modern mind that life is larger than logic, that the mysteries of existence cannot be reduced to sterile categories, and that ultimate truth, even if it can be known at all, can never be fully and finally expressed in our poor words. This reverent agnosticism—'a grave acquiescence in ignorance,' as Newman said—is characteristic of all the best religious

thought in our times, and is a very different thing from the religious impressionism, the studied vagueness, to which reference was made a moment ago. It is one thing to be averse from anything positive because you think loosely and talk largely: it is another thing altogether to hold steadily to definite conclusions because they seem to be inevitable, while at the same time recognizing that human thought and human language can never be really adequate to the task of expressing infinite realities. The two tendencies are absolutely different, though the one may sometimes be found masquerading as the other.

It is only fair to the theologians to point out that the attitude to dogma is also partly conditioned, at least in some writers, by another fact—to speak plainly, by the crassest ignorance as to what it is and what it means. There is a passage in Mr. G. Bernard Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*, in the preface to the play, which illustrates this, and which would be hard to match anywhere as a mixture of incompetence and malice. Mr. Shaw suggests that the Christian faith means 'that the world was made in the year 4004 B.C.; that damnation means an eternity of blazing brimstone; that the Immaculate Conception means that sex is sinful and that Christ was parthenogenetically brought forth by a virgin descended in like manner from a line of virgins right back to Eve; that the Trinity is an anthropomorphic monster with three heads which are yet only one head; that in Rome the bread and wine on the altar become flesh and blood, and in England, in a still more mystical manner, they do and they do not; that the Bible is an infallible scientific manual, an

accurate historical chronicle, and a complete guide to conduct; that we may lie and cheat and murder and then wash ourselves innocent in the blood of the Lamb on Sunday at the cost of a *credo* and a penny in the plate, and so on and so forth.' This is, of course, a deliberate caricature of the Christian faith, and Mr. Shaw has evidently taken considerable pains to make it as malignant as he possibly could, but he has given himself away badly in his misrepresentation. For he obviously thinks that the Virgin Birth and the Immaculate Conception are one and the same thing, and is entirely innocent of the very elementary knowledge that the one is a belief relating to our Lord, embedded in the earliest traditions and the earliest creeds of the Christian Church, and accepted by the vast majority of Christians in every age, and that the other is a belief relating to the Virgin Mary, which grew up during the Middle Ages, which is held only by the Catholics, and which was in fact only defined as an article of Catholic faith in 1854. Then Mr. Shaw proceeds to give this misconceived mixture of two entirely different dogmas a frantic extension which no Christian ever dreamt of attributing to the one, and no Catholic to the other. What would be said of this sort of gross blunder in another connexion?—if some one, for example, writing oracularly on some scientific subject, showed that he thought Democritus' doctrine of atoms to be precisely the same thing as Dalton's theory of atomic weights? Then some rude person would promptly tell the cobbler to stick to his last. But it seems that any one may write authoritatively about theological matters, whether he knows anything about theology or not.

But neither the respectable instinct which warns us against attempting to define the indefinable, nor the less reputable tendency to a vague sentimentality in religion, nor mere ignorance, nor all these things added together, can wholly account for the widespread distrust of dogma in our days. We suggest that the main reason is one more fundamental and more far-reaching. We believe that the intelligence of the modern world distrusts and dislikes not so much the dogmatic result as the dogmatic method.

Science dominates the modern world, and what we loosely call science is really the application of scientific method to various branches of knowledge and inquiry. And scientific method is the method of experiment, of tested experience ; it does not ask what ought to be or what has been said to be, but what *is*—what are the facts ? The man of science seeks to discover for himself, if he can, what it is that actually happens, and then proceeds to relate the discovered fact to the other facts of the universe, and explain it as well as he may. But he begins with the fact, and follows the fact as far as ever it will lead him. It is true that he will sometimes be led, on a basis of fact, to theoretical explanations that are not on the same plane, and that are not verifiable in the same way, as the experienced facts of the universe, but at least the scientist begins with fact, and cleaves to fact as long as he can, and then theorizes on a foundation of fact. When he passes beyond experiment it is on the strength of what experiment has already proved and suggested. This is the real characteristic of scientific method—that it is the method of experiment, which is only another way

of saying, an appeal to actual experience. It begins with, and depends on, all the way through, our experience of fact. It compares and corrects its observations, and continually devises more accurate and more penetrating ways of doing so, but its observations are all observations of fact ; of external fact, usually, but even then of external fact as passing into human experience.

It is this, speaking broadly, that has made the modern world. It is the experimental method that is the basis of all modern science and philosophy. Briefly, authority was the mediaeval word, and experience is the modern word. In the Middle Ages everything went by traditional authority. This, it should be remembered, was the case with mediaeval science as well as with mediaeval religion. The mediaeval physician appealed to the authority of Galen ; the mediaeval astronomer to the authority of Ptolemy. They did not, in the first place, observe and discover and experiment for themselves. It was a second childhood of the world, when men were largely content to believe what the ancients had told them.[1]

Then came the Renaissance and the Reformation. And the great characteristic of the new age was a bold disregard of traditional authority, and a frank appeal to

[1] This spirit, surviving into later days, may be illustrated by an actual incident. Scheiner the Jesuit made the discovery of sun-spots, independently of Galileo. He reported it to the Father-Superior, who said : ' I have read my Aristotle from end to end, and I find that nowhere does he make any mention of spots on the sun. Go, therefore, my son, compose yourself, and be assured that what you take for spots on the sun are due to defects in your glasses or in your eyes, or in both.'

fact—in the first place, to the facts of history, and later, as the physical sciences began to develop, to the facts of nature. The spirit of the new age (which was to become the spirit of the modern world) was expressed in a single sentence by Bacon, when he said, in the *Novum Organum*, that the time had come 'that theories and opinions and common notions should be entirely done away with, and the understanding should begin anew plainly and fairly with *particulars*'[1]—or, as we should say, with *facts*.

Now theology did not at once take over the experimental method. Neither did philosophy, it must be remembered. The reason is fairly plain, in both cases. The material of both philosophy and theology is not matter-of-fact in the same sense that the material of history and of science is. It is not so easy to examine and test the facts of internal experience as the facts which are accessible to the senses. The appeal to experience began, in philosophy, only with Descartes in the seventeenth century, the method was carried on by Locke and Hume in this country, and philosophy only finally awoke from its dogmatic slumber with Kant, toward the end of the eighteenth century.

The history of theology is roughly parallel. In the sixteenth century it clung to the old fashions, and continued to appeal to the authority of tradition. When the breach in the Western Church came, Catholicism took its stand, where it had been for centuries, on the authority of the Church. Protestantism, in a similar fashion, took its stand on the authority of the Bible. On the one hand, an authoritative and in-

[1] *Novum Organum*, 68.

fallible institution ; on the other hand, an authoritative and infallible book. There was, of course, much excuse for this on the side of the Reformers. It seemed necessary to set up against the authority of the Church some other authority equally venerable, equally external, equally accessible to appeal. Some of the mystics, like Schwenckfeld, even then discerned the better way, and would have based the authority of religion on religious experience, but it is not at all surprising that the leading Reformers shrank from such a position. The turmoil of the times, the wild extravagances of fanatics, and the general fear of weakening religious and social authority, made the Reformers instinctively desire a rule of faith more definite and more stable than such a disputable standard as religious experience must have seemed to them, if they ever seriously thought of such a basis. Moreover, there is always another factor to be remembered, which operated then, and operates always, more or less. Religion, unlike philosophy and science, must carry popular suffrages. While philosophy and science are for the intellectual, religion must also be for a multitude of very ordinary folk who are simple believers. Now such people are always impatient of what seems to them vague and subtle and subjective ; they always incline to legalism because they always desire a sharp rule, whether in matters of belief or in matters of conduct. It comforts the mind of the ordinary man to be able to appeal to some legal maxim, some authoritative word, some *ipse dixit* which is the end of doubt and discussion. Since that is an abiding characteristic of the mass of unintellectual humanity,

and since religion is for multitudes of ordinary men, and not for select intellectuals only, there is always a convenience—which is always also a danger—in appealing to some such distinct and definite and (as it seems) unambiguous authority as that of a pontiff or a book. And such conceptions still hold the ground in many minds, though all modern theologians (except among Catholics) have long since moved away from them. Some time ago a leading English review, in dealing with a book on religion, remarked that ' the professional religious teacher, according to the community to which he happens to belong, tells us that we are to find the substance of Christianity in an infallible priest, or an infallible creed, or an infallible book.' And an American psychologist who circulated a questionnaire about religious faith among students reports that the authority appealed to is, among Catholics, the Church, among Protestants, the Bible.[1] Here is a responsible journalist in England, and a number of University students in America, assuming without hesitation that the seat of authority in religion, amongst Protestants, is still in the Bible, regarded as an authoritative and infallible document. And yet almost every responsible theologian to-day would repudiate such a position, and those who hold the Scriptures in the most reverent regard, and believe them to contain the very word of God, would repudiate it as definitely as any one. For, during more than a century past, theology has been adopting the scientific method. Henry Drummond once said that Christianity was learning from science to go back to its facts. That is precisely what

[1] Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 211.

has characterized the whole drift of theological thought since the days of Schleiermacher.

For Schleiermacher marks an epoch in theology. His contribution was a very great one, for many reasons, but most of all for this—that he deliberately grounded dogma in the religious consciousness, and said, in so many words, again and again, that dogma is simply the statement, in the form of logical propositions, of the states of feeling which are characteristic of Christian piety. With Schleiermacher 'feeling' always carries a peculiar content, and it would be a fair statement of his position to say that the dogmas of the Church are the expression, in propositional form, of the normal implications of religious experience within the range of Christianity. Ever since his time that attitude has gained ground among theologians, until to-day it is almost universal. The authority of the Church, of the Creeds, of the Bible, is seen to be not some supernaturally imposed authority of an external kind, but the authority derived from a religious experience which is itself supernatural. When once stated, the position seems inevitable. There was a community of believers before there was a New Testament, or a Creed, or a Church in any developed sense, and it was a community created by a common experience of redemption in Christ. The Church is the elaborated organization of that primitive community; the New Testament is its literature, and therefore possesses a unique value as representing the norm of its experience; the Creeds which come into existence later are the considered statement of the beliefs involved in that experience; but all alike are developed

out of that primitive religious consciousness which gathered around Christ at the beginning, and which has renewed itself continually by continual contact with Him.

It must not be forgotten that what Schleiermacher in Germany did deliberately and scientifically as a theologian was done instinctively and practically by the Wesleys and the early Methodists in England. It is significant that while Schleiermacher was influenced by romanticism and what was then the new German philosophy of idealism, he also owed much, perhaps most of all, to his upbringing among the Moravians at Gnadenfrei, Niesky, and Barby. What the fervour and reality of evangelical piety did for Schleiermacher through the Moravians in Germany, it did for religion generally in England and America through the Methodists. That is to say, it brought out into a new prominence the reality and authority of religious experience. It is significant that the *Minutes* of several of Wesley's early Conferences are almost wholly concerned with the careful examination of the spiritual experience of believers, and while the early Methodists never dreamt of denying or doubting the real authority of either the Scriptures or the Church, they were almost unconsciously shifting both the emphasis and the appeal to experience.

> What we have felt and seen
> With confidence we tell,
> And publish to the sons of men
> The signs infallible!

The hymns of Charles Wesley carried that note throughout the whole of English-speaking Christen-

dom. This, along with the practical extinction of Calvinism in England, was the theological achievement of Methodism. It was a new stress upon religious experience which really implied an appeal to it as the final authority.

The whole range of doctrine illustrates this position. There is nothing really essential in dogma that is not derived from the spiritual life of believers, with all its instincts and implications. Professor Alexander once claimed that metaphysics is ' the most concrete of the sciences,' and defended the claim by pleading that ' in metaphysics no conception is employed for which it is not pointed out directly or indirectly what is the corresponding feature in actual experience.' [1] We should make precisely the same claim for theology, with the necessary limitation that the experience appealed to is not the universal experience of men, but the regenerate experience, the experience of men who have found redemption in Christ. Any dogma may be taken as an instance. Think, for example, of the doctrine of the Trinity, often regarded as almost gratuitously mysterious. We may cheerfully admit that Chalcedonian metaphysics do not appeal to the mind of to-day, and have only a historical interest. We ought to remember, too, that the modern content of the word ' person ' is very different from that of *persona*, and that the whole modern concept of personality did not exist in the early centuries, and was, as a matter of fact, developed (from Boethius onward) out of the very controversies about this doctrine. But when all this is conceded a doctrine of the Trinity

[1] *Some Explanations*, in *Mind*, New Series, xxx, p. 410.

does answer to the facts of experience, and as Wesley said, ' is interwoven with all true Christian faith, with all vital religion. . . . Not that every Christian adverts to this ; perhaps at first not one in twenty, but if you ask any of them a few questions you will find it *implied in what he believes.*' [1] That is certainly true of any religious experience of a standard type within the range of Christianity. For we are compelled to think of God as He is in the eternal mystery of His existence, and we have been taught to call Him our Father ; we find God in Christ, and, in the deepest sense, only in Christ, for the only revelation of God that really satisfies the soul is in His Son ; and we find God as a Spirit active in the hearts and consciences of men in every age, and in every place. There is the ultimate fact of the existence of God, beyond all our words and all our thought. There is the historical revelation of God in humanity, which for every Christian is the central fact of experience. And there is the universal manifestation of God in the moral and spiritual life of men. That is to say, there is, as a matter of fact, a necessary threefoldness in our thought and experience of God, and that cannot, surely, be a purely casual thing : it must go back to something essential in the nature of God. Is it an arbitrary detail, a mere accident, that our knowledge of God is mediated in this way ? Surely that is an intolerable thought to one who believes in a real revelation. There must be that in God which is the eternal ground of this threefold apprehension of Him in the soul of man. And this, apart from technical language (and

[1] Wesley's *Works*, vi, p. 205.

apart from profitless speculation) is practically what the doctrine of the Trinity has always meant. 'We say, Three Persons' (to quote St. Augustine), 'not for the sake of saying *that*, but because *something* must be said.'[1]

Or think of the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ. It will disturb no theologian to admit that few things in the history of human thought are so dreary, so profitless, and, one may add, so fundamentally irreverent, as the Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries. Nor will it alarm any theologian if we confess that terms like *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις* and *natura* are no longer to be regarded as really adequate to express the supreme fact of Christ's personality. But the intention of those definitions was to safeguard, within the limits of the philosophical thought and terminology of earlier centuries, the belief that there was in Christ an absolutely real and an absolutely unique manifestation of God. And that is a fact of experience. The believing soul does find God in Christ, as nowhere else. The sense of an actual contact with God, and an assurance of His reality, and His love; the experience of God as really known and really loved, because He has really loved us and really made Himself known to us, is gained through Christ and through Christ alone. He does reveal God, He is God manifest in the flesh, to every believing soul. And that is the fact in religious experience that is behind the whole dogmatic construction of Christology.

Or think of the doctrine of the Atonement. There

[1] *De Trin.*, v. 9.

have been many theories of the Atonement, and perhaps there is at least a hint of truth in every one of these. There have also been many crude and coarse expressions of the truth, and there is nothing sacrosanct about either the speculations or the phraseology. But it is a fact, and a vital fact, in the religious experience of normal Christians that the forgiveness of sins is realized through a sense of personal relation to the death of Christ upon the Cross. The central place of the Mass in Catholicism, at one extreme, and the constant emphasis upon the blood of Christ in the preaching of the Salvation Army, at the other extreme, are enough to illustrate that. If there is any such thing as religious experience at all it is certainly a fact of religious experience that the soul of the believer reaches and retains a sense of the forgiving love of God only in an act of faith directed to the Cross. In every age the believing soul has felt and known that we are 'accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.' Any dogma of the Atonement is an attempt to state, and any theory of it is an attempt to explain, that fact of experience.

It has sometimes been objected to this view of the authority of experience that every orthodox believer accepts some doctrines—as to the future life, for example—that cannot be brought to the test of experience and for which we have therefore no real ground at all, on this line of defence. The objection seems to be an empty one. For all that the Christian Church has ever believed as to the future life has been believed on the word of the Lord Jesus Christ. And

why does any one take His word for it? Assuredly only because they have already, in their own experience, an ample warrant for doing so. If any man has found God and redemption and every secret of life and every source of strength in Christ—if this is a real experience, it is one so great and so unique and so satisfying to the soul that the believer is ready to take Christ's word for anything. If I find what an expert says and does within the range of my own experience to be amazingly true and incredibly effective, it is reasonable, on the strength of that experience, to accept his assurance about something further, as to which he claims to possess knowledge and authority, but which is beyond the reach of present verification. Why do believers accept Christ's words of consolation and of warning with regard to the future life? On the strength of their own actual experience of Him as a living Saviour. Certainly no one will for long accept the authority of Christ's words in any real and effective sense except on the ground of such an experience. Even when religious belief goes beyond actual experience, it is on the strength of experience.

There is, we are sure, only one right way to approach dogma, and it is along the line of religious experience. Nearly every competent theologian has learned that lesson long ago, but it seems that it still has to be learned by most of our *littérateurs* who venture to write about the dogmatic beliefs of the Christian Church, and by many other people as well.

# II

# THE THEORY OF MIRACLE

Τάχ' ἄν τις εἰκὸς αὐτὸ τοῦτ' εἶναι λέγοι,
Βροτοῖσι πολλὰ τυγχάνειν οὐκ εἰκότα.

Agathon (in Aristotle, *Rhet.* ii. 24, 1402 a, 10).

## II

## THE THEORY OF MIRACLE

The present study is not concerned with the defence of any particular miracles, or with the religious value and significance of miracles in general, but merely with what may be called the philosophical theory of miracle. Some such theory, we believe, will always be a vital concern of religion. For while, on the one hand, many of us would not be disquieted if some of the miracles recorded in Scripture, particularly those of which the record dates from very early times, came to be regarded as legendary accretions (though that kind of conclusion is often too easily assumed), yet, on the other hand, we may be quite certain that it is impossible to evacuate the miraculous altogether. There is a steady strain of the miraculous in religion, which shows itself repeatedly in the experience of believers, especially in regard to prayer and providence, and whenever religious experience reaches a particular intensity, as in the lives of the saints and in periods of religious revivals, that supernatural element approaches, and, as I believe, passes the border of physical miracle. There is, in fact, a continuous experience of the supernatural in religion, and any doctrinaire attempt to eradicate the miraculous becomes hopelessly uncritical and unhistorical. The absolute denial of all miracles, especially those which

gather around the Person of our Lord and the higher reaches of Christian experience, results in greater incredibilities than are involved in any belief in miracle. As Dante said:

> Se il mondo si rivolse al Cristianesmo,
> diss' io, senza miracoli, quest' uno
> è tal che gli altri non sono il centesmo.[1]

Now there is a general impression that modern knowledge has made it difficult, if not impossible, to believe in the miraculous. That is simply assumed, without any sort of argument, in a great deal that is written in these days. It has become a kind of axiom with many writers. It is suggested that in the ages of faith men were simple-minded, and prepared to accept uncritically all sorts of marvels, but that in our days the march of progress and all the discoveries of science have made it impossible for us to accept these naïve prodigies. Now it is, of course, a fact that for several generations the world has been preoccupied with the investigation of the properties of matter, and that in popular thought an enormous emphasis has consequently been placed upon what is regarded as the automatic regularity of nature. It is doubtless true enough that these things have made it more difficult for the general mind to believe in miracle.

But there can be no doubt at all that, for any one who possesses any power of detached thought, the whole drift of science and philosophy for the last thirty years has made it vastly easier to believe in the miraculous. For what do we mean by miracles? What are the lines upon which our definitions of the miraculous

[1] *Paradiso*, xxiv. 106–8.

are framed? A definition of miracle will always be found to turn upon a reference to what is possible, or what is credible, or what is natural. An unbeliever in the miraculous will define miracle as a supposed event beyond the range of credibility or possibility. A believer in the miraculous will often enough define miracle as an event beyond the order of nature. Now it is not too much to say that modern science has definitely superseded these definitions, since science itself has fully and finally obliterated the traditional lines of distinction between the possible and the impossible, the credible and the incredible, the natural and the supernatural. For science is actually doing things that yesterday would have been miraculous, and no thinking man would care to set bounds to the scientific achievements of the future. Who shall say what is possible? The impossibilities of a few years ago are the familiar experiences of to-day. There is one classical case where a canon of impossibility was deliberately stated by a distinguished thinker. The French philosopher Comte declared that it would always be impossible for us to determine the chemical constitution of the fixed stars. The working of his mind is quite obvious and quite logical. The fixed stars are many millions of miles away; it is impossible for men to visit these distant spheres; a chemical analysis cannot be undertaken unless a sample can be secured, and that is impossible apart from an actual visit; therefore it will always be impossible for us to know anything about the chemical constitution of the fixed stars. It is quite consistent and convincing. One almost expects the ratiocination to end with a French-

man's *Voilà*! Unfortunately, however, some inconsiderate investigators proceeded to develop the science of spectroscopy, with the result that we know a great deal about the chemical constitution of the fixed stars. And whatever impossibility you select may be rendered possible in some equally unforeseen and unforeseeable way. No rational person to-day would care to define a permanent impossibility. And who shall say what is credible? Things that would have been utterly incredible and inconceivable in the younger days of many of us are ordinary features of our lives to-day. Thirty years ago or so no one would have believed you if you had announced that a doctor would presently be able to see a fracture in one of your bones, without exposing it, and without even touching your body. The incredulity would have been strictly logical too. Flesh is not transparent, and without an incision by which the light can penetrate to the fracture it is obviously impossible to see it; such would have been the argument, and a perfectly sound one, thirty years ago. But the so-called X-rays are discovered, and the incredible, inconceivable thing of thirty years ago becomes a daily practice in our hospitals. And who shall say what is natural? A thing may be supernatural to one level of intelligence and natural to another, as Butler argued long ago. 'There may be beings in the universe whose capacities, and knowledge, and views, may be so extensive that the whole Christian dispensation may to them appear natural, that is, analogous or conformable to God's dealings with other parts of His creation: as natural as the visible known course of things appears to us. For

there seems scarce any other possible sense to be put upon the word but that only in which it is here used ; similar, stated, or uniform.' [1] The very difference that Butler suggests as between angels and men exists in fact as between a savage people and a civilized people. When the African explorer got into difficulties with the natives, he took out his glass eye, flung it into the air, caught it, and replaced it, whereupon the astonished natives grovelled at his feet and worshipped him. Now that was, *in the strictest sense of the word*, a miracle to those savages, but it is not a miracle to us ; it was supernatural to them, but it is natural to us.

We spell Nature with a capital letter and almost deify the conception in our thoughts, but what does it really mean ? Merely that system of events with which we are familiar, because the events happen so frequently and so regularly that we have become familiarized with them. As Pascal said : *' J'ai grand'peur que cette nature ne soit elle-même qu'une première coutume, comme la coutume est une seconde nature.*[2] Thus there is nothing more intrinsically unlikely about the resurrection of a dead man than about the birth of a child. Indeed, it might be argued that the intrinsic improbability is less, for, from a purely detached point of view, it is less strange that a life which has already existed should return, after it has departed, than that an entirely new life should come into existence. But the one event happens constantly, and we are familiar with it ; therefore we forget the wonder of it, and call it natural. The other event (assuming for the moment that it does happen) only happens very occasionally, and we are

[1] *Analogy*, I. 1, p. 34. [2] *Pensées*, II. 93, p. 39.

utterly unfamiliar with it; therefore we realize the wonder of it, and we call it supernatural. What is repeated and regular and habitual we call natural: what is isolated and irregular and unfamiliar we call supernatural.

But we ought always to remember that, as St. Augustine said, what we call supernatural is *non contra naturam sed contra quam est nota natura*.[1] For the fact is that the word nature is used very ambiguously. Sometimes we mean by nature the partial system of actual events, regularly experienced by us, and therefore familiar to us. And sometimes we mean by nature the entire system of possible events which, as we instinctively feel, must be a regular whole, but it is not all of it regularly experienced by us, and therefore is not all of it familiar to us. For it is quite obvious that there are events which are seldom experienced by us, and that there are also events which have never yet been experienced by us at all. The whole process of scientific discovery illustrates this. Here is some new fact which emerges in the course of research. If it is on the physical plane we are sure that it must be related in a regular way to the whole system of physical facts as known to us, and, since we know a good deal about physical facts, we are generally able to see almost immediately what that regular relation is. If it is on the psychical plane we are sure that it must be related in a regular way to the whole system of physical and psychical facts as known to us, though as we know less about the psychical (and about the relations between the psychical and the

[1] *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 8. (Cf. *De Trin*, III, 11.)

physical) than we know about the physical, we are often unable to see precisely what that regular relation is. If it is what we call a miracle we are equally sure that it must be related in a regular way to the universal system of facts, physical, psychical, and spiritual, which we call the universe, though, as our knowledge is naturally less and less as we approach the ultimate, we may be entirely unable to conceive what that regular relation is. All that we mean by the supernatural—all that we can logically mean by it—is covered by these last terms. It cannot mean anything that is beyond nature in the larger sense, the whole system of ordered events in the universe; any such thing is strictly unthinkable. It must mean something that is beyond nature in the narrower sense, nature as familiarly experienced by us, *nota natura*.

It is nothing less than a calamity that the classical definition of miracle in the theologians of the past has generally represented it as an interposition in the order of nature, or as a breach of the laws of nature. This goes back to St. Thomas Aquinas: *Aliquid dicitur esse miraculum, quod fit praeter ordinem totius naturae creatae. Hoc autem non potest facere nisi Deus: quia quidquid facit angelus vel quaecumque alia creatura propria virtute, hoc fit secundum ordinem naturae creatae, et sic non est miraculum.*[1] It is perhaps a sufficient criticism of this conception of miracle to point out that it depends absolutely upon an implicit Deism. The universe is regarded as created by God in the first place, and then, so to speak, as running by its first momentum, any further contact with God being

[1] *Summa Theol.*, P. i, q. 110, art. 4, *ad fin.*

in the nature of an interference with the machinery. I am not suggesting that this was really St. Thomas' cosmological doctrine. I am merely pointing out that this is the implicit conception which is actually involved in this definition of miracle. To define miracle as that which is beyond the laws of the whole of created nature is to make it an interposition by God into an order previously established by Him, and a doctrine of the universe as established in the first place by God, yet in which His future action is reduced to interference, is mere Deism. It is an implicit denial of the existence of the Deity as a present and active and living God.

The fact is that a miracle, if there be any such thing, must be relative and not absolute. There cannot be an absolute miracle; it is a contradiction in terms. An absolute miracle would be a portent standing outside of the entire order of the universe; a cosmic excrescence, uncaused by and unconnected with everything else; equally without relation to God and without relation to the universe. Such a thing is strictly inconceivable. A thing may be a portent in relation to what is limited or what is partial, for it may stand outside, or it may seem to stand outside, a limited order; it may appear as a portent in relation to our partial knowledge or our partial experience, as an exception in regard to the order of nature as known to us. But it must be relative to some order or some experience which is less than universal. Manifestly there cannot be a miracle which is a miracle in relation to God and in relation to the entire universe.

There is surely no great subtlety about this view of miracle, and yet it is surprising what difficulties it seems

to present to some minds. Here are three almost haphazard examples which have occurred in my reading of late, one from a Scottish philosopher of the past, one from a French man of letters who died only the other day, and one from a contemporary English theologian, which show how completely the conception seems to elude many able thinkers. Sir William Hamilton wrote, in discussing Berkeley's idealism: 'But if Berkeley held that the Deity caused no permanent material universe to exist, and to act uniformly as one, but does Himself either infuse into our several minds the phenomena perceived and affective, or determines our several minds to elicit within consciousness such apprehended qualities or felt affections; in that case I can recognize in Berkeley's theory only a scheme of theistic idealism—in fact, only a scheme of perpetual and universal miracle, against which the law of parsimony is conclusive, if the Divine interposition be not proved necessary to render possible the facts.' [1]

Now in the first place the law of parsimony has no possible application here. When the first cause of universal existence is in question there is nothing whatever to choose, on that score, between the theory that all that exists was originated by repeated acts of creation, and the theory that all that exists was originated by a single act of creation; because the many acts would be precisely equivalent in cumulative creative energy, so to speak, to the one act. In other words, it would be quite as wonderful for God to originate in one creative act a self-acting universe, as for Him to originate every existing event by a separate *fiat.*

[1] Veitch's *Hamilton*, pp. 180–1.

I pass by the superannuated Deism of the former conception without comment: all that I am concerned about at the moment is to point out that every possible scheme of a universe—the universe as it exists, and every universe that could possibly exist—is (or is not, as you like, but equally is or equally is not) 'a scheme of perpetual and universal miracle.' Consider the *naïveté* of thinking of *this* universe as 'natural,' and of any other universe that might have existed in its place as 'miraculous!' If Sir William Hamilton was using the word loosely, and meant by 'miracle' merely a marvel, it is obvious that any universe that could possibly exist would be precisely as great a marvel as any other. If he was using the word more accurately, and meant by 'miracle' a portent, an inexplicable exception, a supernatural event, then in what sense could any universe be that? In relation to what order could it be a portent? To what system could it be an exception? What nature could it be beyond? A miracle must be relative to some order that it transcends, or appears to transcend, and when the universal order is in question, whatever that order may be, it is obvious that nothing can transcend it, and therefore to speak of miracle is meaningless.

Again, M. Anatole France, after shrewdly criticizing the dictum of Renan, that 'miracles are things that never happen,' and arguing that this is 'to grant a great deal too much to established science, and to suppose that we are acquainted with all the laws of the universe,' which is obviously not the case, goes on to say: 'Not only has a philosopher never beheld a

miracle; he is incapable of ever beholding one. All the thaumaturgists in the world might place before him the most extraordinary appearances; they would only be wasting their time. In observing all these marvellous facts he would concern himself solely with seeking the law controlling them, and if he did not discover it he would merely say: "Our knowledge of physics and chemistry is very incomplete." Thus there never has been a miracle in the true sense of the word, or if there has been, we could not know of it, since, being ignorant of nature, we are equally ignorant of all that is not nature.' [1]

Think of the extraordinary logic here. It is like saying that there cannot be any such thing as a conjuror's trick, because if we saw a man beheaded on the stage we should know that it was only some clever illusion. But that is what we mean by a conjuror's trick. Or, to use a more dignified and philosophical example, it is like saying that there cannot be any such thing as a separate event, because every such event is really connected with and conditioned by every other event in the universe, and is merely isolated in our minds for the purposes of thought. But that is all that any intelligent man ever meant by a separate event. An admitted miracle is defined, and then it is oracularly stated that by the very terms of the definition it cannot be a miracle. When you reduce the argument to strict logical form, it runs thus—This is a miracle, because the cause is unknown, though there must be a cause. This is not a miracle, because there must be a cause, though the cause is unknown. But

[1] *La Vie Littéraire* (*Quatrième Série*), p. 107.

even so delightful a writer as M. Anatole France cannot have it both ways when he adventures forth as a theologian.

There is one other point to be remarked. The philosopher would merely say, according to M. France, 'our knowledge of physics and chemistry is very incomplete.' That is, it is quietly assumed that every conceivable event can be explained finally in terms of physics and chemistry—a conclusion that most responsible thinkers would repudiate with emphasis, and that sufficiently marks M. Anatole France's philosophy as out of date by fifty years.

Once again, Dr. Orchard, in a recent book, has written: 'Augustine is often quoted when he speaks of miracle as something that is contrary to nature *as it is known*; but such a definition does not bring out the essential characteristic of miracles, for it would imply that if only we knew the laws or forces at present obscured from us, we should know that the thing was not a miracle at all.'[1] Upon the last clause one can only remark, Certainly! One would think that it was perfectly obvious that nothing could be a miracle if only we knew all the laws and forces governing it. But what does Dr. Orchard suppose the essential characteristic of miracles to be? Does he suppose that a miracle ought to be still somehow a miracle to us even if we knew the laws and forces which account for it? That is plainly impossible. Nothing is a miracle to God; nothing could be a miracle to an absolute mind, for such a mind would see everything as comprehended in a known system, and nothing could be a portent, for

[1] *Foundations of Faith*, i, *Theological*, p. 154.

nothing could present itself as an apparent irregularity. It is precisely Bishop Butler's point once more, that nothing would be a miracle to angelic beings, because to the higher reach of intelligence and the higher range of knowledge all things would appear natural, that is, as falling into one complete and consistent order of events, known as complete and consistent.

The only satisfactory definition of miracle would be on some such lines as these—a miracle is that which it is impossible for any normal man, in a given state of attainment, to perform, and which it is impossible for any normal mind, in a given state of knowledge, to explain. In other words, miracle is a relative term. A miracle is relative to some limited power, or some restricted experience, or some partial knowledge. A moment's thought is sufficient to show that it cannot be absolute. A miracle which is a miracle everywhere and always, to the highest as well as to the lowest intelligence, to God as well as to man, is utterly unthinkable. A miracle must be relative to the limited powers and the finite intelligence of those who witness it.

So the same event may be miraculous to a savage, and natural to a civilized man ; it may be miraculous in the first century, and, for anything we know, natural in the twenty-first century, if by the latter time the knowledge of man has sufficiently advanced for him to understand the laws which govern it, and therefore to enable him to bring it to pass. Thus scientific marvels, and indeed most things in the world, are miraculous to the savage, and to the child, until they get used to them, and begin to understand them. And

many ordinary things in the life of to-day would be miraculous to our great-grandfathers, if they could be brought back to this world, until these things had become familiar to them, and had been explained to them. And so, in a precisely similar way, the wonderful works of our Lord are miraculous to us, and they may, or they may not, for anything we know, be miraculous *in that sense* to our posterity a thousand years hence. But in the only sense that matters, in the only sense that has any religious value, they will always be miraculous, because even if we fantastically suppose that a thousand years hence, through the progress of knowledge, men are able to heal the sick and raise the dead, the past miracle would remain in the fact that our Lord was able to do these wonders long centuries ahead of the rest of humanity.

It is not suggested that there is anything at all new or revolutionary in this theory of miracle. In fact it is all involved in the famous passages which have been quoted from St. Augustine and Bishop Butler. But it does seem to be clear that many writers who have dealt with the miraculous have not really understood this view of it, and there is no doubt at all in the writer's mind that this is the only view of miracle that is either defensible, or indeed intelligible, in the last resort.

# III

# THEOLOGY AND PROGRESS

Die Dogmatik nimmt daher nicht ihren Ausgangspunkt in dem Zweifel, was als Forderung für die Philosophie oft aufgestellt ist, entwickelt sich nicht aus der Leere des Zweifels, sondern aus der Fülle des Glaubens.

Martensen, *Die christliche Dogmatik*, p. 3.

## III

## THEOLOGY AND PROGRESS

An attempt to deal with the relation between theology and progress may be difficult, but it is at least timely. For that relation is very much in the minds of men in these days. It would not be an exaggeration to say that it is in the minds of all who think seriously about the intellectual implications of religion, whatever their personal attitude may be, and that it conditions nearly all contemporary discussions of religious matters. It is in the background of men's thoughts, even when it is not being explicitly canvassed. It obsesses equally the mind of the obscurantist, who regards the very notion of progress in theology as the modern apostasy; the mind of the modernist, who regards it as the ruling factor in the religious situation; and the mind of the unbeliever, who regards it as the inexorable solvent of all dogmatic religion. Whether they have really thought out what progress means in relation to theology or whether they have not—and usually the latter is the case—the thought of that relation is always present in their minds.

Now it should certainly be emphasized, first of all, that the general conception of progress is quite distinctively Christian. It belongs to a range of ideas that only entered the world with the conquest of paganism by Christianity. The classical world thought of

advance only as a phase in a recurrent cycle. The poets and philosophers of Greece and Rome did not think of the world as advancing once for all toward the fulfilment of an eternal purpose; when they had dreams of perfection they rather thought of the ages revolving and bringing back again the perfect days of the past. It was *Astraea redux.*

*Magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo.*
*Iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna.*

The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return.

But progress, in the sense of a definitive advance toward the accomplishment of an essential purpose which is the eternal will of God, and for the sake of which the world and man exist, is a definitely Christian thought. And that, of course, is the conception upon which all lesser thoughts of progress depend for their very meaning. The whole conception is born from a faith in the purposive character of existence, with its concurrent emphasis upon personality, both in God and man. Progress is meaningless without purpose, and purpose is meaningless without personality. But, given the fact of the personality of God and the fact of human personality, the conception of progress is involved in their relation, and most of all in the very thought of redemption. What is the concept of redemption but that of the gradual fulfilment in the history of the world of an eternal purpose of love which involves new experiences both in the life of man and in the life of God?

The general conception of progress, therefore, is

definitely and distinctively Christian, and, as such, it is present throughout the whole history of Christian thought. But it has been very largely accentuated by several facts and factors which belong peculiarly to the modern world. One of these is the enormous progress of science, especially of applied science, which has so wonderfully transformed the world in which we live during the last three or four generations. The special importance of this, from our point of view at the moment, is that it has provided everybody with such an immense and impressive example of one kind of progress. The most thoughtless person can hardly miss the contrast between his own matchbox and his great-grandfather's tinderbox, between the tallow candle of a hundred and fifty years ago and the electric light of to-day. On the material and mechanical side of life there have been amazing changes within the short space of two or three generations, and this has impressed the popular mind with the notion that progress always means changes of a startling and spectacular kind. The superficial thinker has come to feel that thought, if it is really modern and progressive, must present contrasts as complete, in comparison with the thought of the past, as the contrast between the aeroplane and the post-chaise.

Then there is also the widespread influence of the doctrine of evolution, which is only a biological particularization, so to speak, of the general conception of progress. It is unnecessary to go into any detail here. It will suffice to say that evolutionary doctrine has been strikingly confirmed, at least in its main outlines, by scientific discovery, and that it has been

so wonderfully illuminative in a dozen different departments of knowledge that it has enormously influenced all the thought of the past fifty years; and that on the whole the intellectual and spiritual gain has been immense. The popularizations of the doctrine have often enough been misleading, especially in the direction of leading the more uninstructed mind to regard progress as a sort of involuntary, inevitable, automatic movement toward universal betterment, which is to ignore completely the purposive and selective elements which are of the essence of evolution. But, on the whole, that doctrine has been of vast value in almost every province of knowledge.

It has been said that the eighteenth century was dominated by Newton and the law of gravitation, and that the nineteenth century was dominated by Darwin and the law of evolution. It would naturally follow that as the thought of the eighteenth century was on mechanistic lines, the thought of the nineteenth century ought to have been on organic lines. And most of the best thought of the last two or three generations is. But the less severe and scholarly minds of any age are always a little behindhand. As a familiar example of this, second-rate scepticism is always attacking religion, and second-rate apologetics is always defending it, with weapons that went out of date fifty years ago. Things have changed, and these straggling warriors do not realize it. The survival of belated fashions of thought explains many things in this strange world.

Now I am convinced that the survival of mechanistic ways of thought, which really belong to the past, but

which seem curiously justified (to the shallower mind) by all the mechanical progress we see around us, explains a great deal in the modern world. It explains, I think, most of the aberrations in art and literature to-day—the freaks of the advanced schools. The Cubists and the Vorticists and the Futurists in art; the devotees of *vers libre*, and the ultra-modern poets who write of 'wooden rain' and 'braying sunlight' (to quote two perfectly genuine and gorgeous examples) in literature; the shapeless music of the composers to whom Strauss and Stravinsky are already out of date, and Wagner positively mediaeval—is there any formula that will explain all these symptoms? I think there is; it is the unexpressed thought that to be really modern, really progressive, you *must* discard past forms, you *must* invent new methods and new effects. There is some truth, of course, in Diderot's saying: *Quand on désespère de faire une chose belle, naturelle, et simple, on en tente une bizarre.* But there is more than that in it; there is a principle. It is the conviction that the art, the music, the literature of to-day, ought to be, and must be, as different from those of the past as a typewriter is different from a quill pen, and that if it is not, it is not really in the line of progress. In other words, a false analogy is present in the modern mind—the notion of mechanical progress carried across into a region where it does not, and cannot, apply. And it is the mechanical progress we see around us in the external world that actually sustains that analogy, and that apparently justifies it, in the modern mind.

Thus progressive science is often contrasted with

unprogressive theology. But when we think of the progress of science it is not ordinarily any advance in pure knowledge of the ultimate facts of the universe that we have in mind. If it were one might think of the theories of modern physics, and then pause at the remembrance of Democritus and atoms, or Leibnitz and monads, and wonder if the advance in intellectual construction is so very great after all. But what is really in mind when we speak of the progress of science is not generally any ultimate knowledge or ultimate theory at all. It is the amazing changes which have come into the practical life of civilized man through improved mechanism, due, of course, to the increase of scientific knowledge. Then there comes the suggestion: Why not radical changes of a parallel kind in theology—which, it is assumed, would accompany similar progress? This masked fallacy appears in some surprising places. It is this, I think, which vitiates a good deal of theological modernism. Thus, while every reader of George Tyrrell must be impressed by his subtle qualities of moral and spiritual insight, many will also have a sense of something oblique and impracticable in his general outlook on religion—apart altogether from his difficulties with his own Church. We suggest that the clue to this is to be found in a sentence like the following, from one of his letters: 'We have much to learn yet. Religion is as much in its infancy as science was till a few generations back.' Consider what this connotes. It really means that the Apostle Paul and St. Augustine and Luther are as much out of date in religion as the elder Pliny and Martianus Capella and Paracelsus are in science,

and that religion ought to break with the past and develop on new lines. Now surely this has only to be plainly stated to be seen to be not only false but absurd. Spiritual intuition and spiritual experience do not go out of date like knowledge of material and mechanical things, and progress in the one region cannot be on lines at all parallel to progress in the other. It is the knowledge of *sensibilia* which becomes superannuated by the accumulation of new facts. But there is nothing really corresponding to that in the field of poetry and philosophy and religion. There our knowledge does not so much accumulate as deepen and clarify, though the forms (whether of thought or of language) in which it was expressed in past generations will naturally become archaic. Homer and Dante are not superseded by the advance of knowledge like Ptolemy and Alphonso of Castile. All that can affect the ' dateless rhyme ' of the great poets is really superficial—mere changes in fashions of thought and forms of speech. Their aesthetic and intellectual supremacy is invulnerable by time. And so with the religious supremacy of deep spiritual insight and deep spiritual experience. There is an unchanged and unchangeable quality in it.

For in every realm of the intellect and of the spirit progress does not, and cannot, mean anything mechanical, or anything that is an analogy of anything mechanical; it means organic growth, and it cannot mean anything else. Now growth means change, but it means continuity also. Here we plunge into metaphysics, for there is no final escape from that adventure. Any conception of progress really involves the philo-

sophical problem of change and continuity. When a thing changes, it remains the same in some sense, or else there would be nothing of which you could say that it had changed. Change and continuity are correlative ; neither word means anything at all without the other. It is only in a universe where things change that there is any meaning in saying that a thing remains the same ; it is only in a universe where things remain the same that there is any meaning in saying that a thing changes. Change and continuity are present in everything. How do they stand related ? We cannot really go beyond this (the precise terms may be criticized, of course, as a survival of scholasticism, but however you vary the terms the conclusion is much the same)—that change is in the form and not in the substance, in the accidents and not in the essence, in the processes of growth, in development and decay, and not in the essential identity of the thing.

Now so it surely must be with that intellectual interpretation of the facts of religion that we call theology. It is in the angle of approach, in the method of investigation, in the form of thought in which we apprehend the truth, in the form of language in which we express the truth, that there is change, and not in the essence of the truth itself. At this point the wiseacre will be sure to remark, ' Ah ! but what is the essence of the truth ? ' It is a question that looks more difficult than it really is. There cannot be very much doubt as to where the essence of the truth lies within the sphere of Christianity. For the great mass of those who call themselves by the name

of Christ, for all, perhaps, who really desire to be called by that name, there is general agreement as to where the very core of our religion is to be found. It is the unique fact of Christ. That, and all that is involved in it—a unique revelation of God, a unique redemption of humanity, with all the necessary reactions upon faith and experience, upon thought and life—there is the essence of our religion and therefore of our theology.

Now in what sense can there be progress in theology in relation to the fact of Christ? The fact is a fact; it is *given*, so to speak, both in history and in experience. It is and it must be, in some sense, a constant quantity, an unchanged and unchanging fact. In what sense can there be, in regard to it, intellectual progress?

Here a specific example may be helpful. The most unquestionable advance in dogmatic theology during the last hundred years (as I think) has been the development of the doctrine of κένωσις. It has given us a better conception both of the real humanity and of the real divinity of our Lord. It is not too much to say that modern Christology, when it is really scientific and really reverent, is a more adequate interpretation of our Lord's person and work than the Church has ever possessed before. But all this modern development of doctrine is implicit in the historic fact, and in the earliest records of the historic fact, and in the experimental realization of the historic fact.

It is developed, in the first place, from a classical passage in the New Testament—Phil. ii. 5–11. We are not concerned, for the moment, with the precise

exegesis of the passage. It is sufficient to observe, in passing, that it was a paragraph of the New Testament that was the germ of the dogmatic development. But, more than that, it is implicit in the Gospels, in a hundred places which show that our Lord accepted all the limitations of our humanity—in every act and word that indicates surprise and disappointment and ignorance. More than that, again, it is implicit in that appropriation of our Lord's life in the life of the believing soul that we call religious experience. The reality of the sacrifice involved in our Lord's earthly life has been the ground of devotion in the pious soul in every age.

> He left His Father's throne above,
> So free, so infinite His grace;
> Emptied Himself of all but love,
> And bled for Adam's helpless race!

That is to say, all that the modern Kenotic doctrine expounds is *there* in the historic fact, is *implied* in the literary record, and is *felt* in the life of the soul, before ever it is dogmatically developed.

Now here is a genuine example of dogmatic progress, and it is not a deliberate demolition of ancient doctrine, and a deliberate substitution of modern doctrine; it is the natural development of what has been implicit from the beginning. It is a genuine instance of theological progress, because it is an organic growth.

Surely this is true all the way through. We do not really progress in theology, or in philosophy, or in any intellectual or spiritual discipline, by discarding and demolishing the products of the past. There is no real parallel here (though the imagined parallel does

seem to obsess the minds of many religious writers to-day) to the action of a manufacturer who deliberately scraps an old, obsolete machine in order to put in a more recent invention—that is a mechanical example, and therefore a false analogy. The true analogy is that of natural growth, which is not discontinuous substitution, but continuous development. It is true, of course, that there is intellectual continuity behind the mechanical discontinuity. All mechanical progress presents itself as a series of improvements which involve the definite supersession of one invention by another which is better ; the stage-coach passes out of existence and the steam-locomotive takes its place. One thing is deliberately destroyed, and another thing is deliberately constructed to succeed it. But in the mind of the engineer there is an unbroken evolution ; it is a further development of the wheeled vehicle, and the locomotive is the lineal descendant of the coach. But it is precisely this which is so often forgotten—that in all matter of the intellect, such as theology and philosophy and literature, there cannot properly or profitably be the discontinuity—the deliberate discarding of one thing and the deliberate adoption of another thing—that characterizes the material order of progress, but there must be the continuous evolution, the unbroken development of one conception, which characterizes the intellectual order of progress. The real analogy is that of natural growth, as the plant changes by developing all that was latent in the seed, and by absorbing all that is suitable in the environment, and in the process slowly and continuously changes in shape and size and colour, and yet all the

time it is the same plant, for it carries its identity and its destiny within itself from the beginning.

So there are these two things all the way—a principle of continuity and a principle of change—and both are united in the process of growth. Both are there, both must be there, and the wise man recognizes both and exaggerates neither. It is doubtless a matter of intellectual temperament as to whether the one or the other most impresses our minds. But it is usually the shallower mind that is obsessed by the change, and the profounder mind that is impressed by the continuity. As Mr. G. K. Chesterton once said, the really remarkable thing is not that the pumpkin should change into a coach, as it does in the fairy-tale, but the really remarkable thing is that the pumpkin should go on being a pumpkin. And so it is, for any one who has thought deeply about the problems of the universe. The most impressive fact is not that there should be change in the universe, but that there should be a universe at all—that there should be sufficient continuity in things to make a cosmic unity. Moreover, upon any theory of the universe whatever, there must be more of change at the periphery, so to speak, and more of stability at the centre. In other words, less and less of change will be found as we leave the fleeting phenomena of the universe and approach the central principle or power, whatever it may be. So that if theology has any right to its pretensions and its name, and is in any sense a real science of God and of the things of God, it is in fact largely dealing with that which lies beyond the realm of change, and the only progress there can be in theology is that which comes with the

better understanding and the better expression of truths that are really changeless. As the Schoolmen said: *non profectus fides in fideli, sed profectus fidelis in fide.*

Thus, in modern theology, there is a different route of approach, a different basis of authority, a more scientific treatment of material—all of which are immensely to the good; but, in so far as it is really scientific, I believe you have substantially the same result. There is a changed attitude, and a changed method, as indeed there has been, more or less, from one generation to another throughout the past, and must be throughout the future; but it is the same faith, because it is a living faith, based upon the same fact, because it is a living fact; the faith that was once for all delivered unto the saints.

# IV

# THE PROBLEM OF PRAYER

*Regnum coelorum* violenza pate
da calda amore e da viva speranza,
che vince la divina volontate;

non a guisa che l'uomo all' uom sopranza,
ma vince lei, perchè vuole esser vinta,
e vinta vince con sua beninanza.

Dante, *Paradiso*, xx. 94–9.

## IV

## THE PROBLEM OF PRAYER

WHENEVER the problem of prayer is discussed, either from the believing or from the unbelieving standpoint, it is generally assumed that the difficulties are scientific and philosophical. Now in any doctrine of prayer there really are theological difficulties, which gather around the thought of the perfect knowledge and the perfect love of God, but the alleged scientific and philosophical difficulties appear to be mere fallacies, and it is a constant surprise that many responsible thinkers should treat them as respectfully as they do. The assumption is always that the modern conception of the universe, which is expressed in phrases like the uniformity of nature, the universality of law, and so forth, makes it impossible to believe in prayer as really effecting anything in the physical universe, though it may possibly have some sort of effect in the psychical region. Some apologists have made a most illogical attempt at compromise along the lines of this saving clause, and have taught that we ought to pray for grace and guidance in our soul's life, since this belongs to the spiritual realm, and that we may even perhaps pray for recovery from illness, since there are psychical factors which co-operate with physical factors in such a case, but that we decidedly must not pray for a change of wind, since this is purely a matter of cause

and effect in the natural world.[1] That position has actually been endorsed by no less a man than William James. 'We have heard much talk of late,' he once wrote, 'against prayer, especially against prayers for better weather and for the recovery of sick people. As regards prayers for the sick, if any medical fact can be considered to stand firm, it is that in certain environments prayer may contribute to recovery, and should be encouraged as a therapeutic measure. Being a normal factor of moral health in the person, its omission would be deleterious. The case of the weather is different. Notwithstanding the recency of the opposite belief, every one now knows that droughts and storms follow from physical antecedents, and that moral appeals cannot avert them.'[2] That is to say, prayer, as a sort of auto-suggestion, has moral results which induce physical results. So that there is some active relation between the moral and the physical, at least within the sphere of human personality. Nevertheless, the universe is sharply divided into two halves, the physical and the moral, which (despite the connexion conceded above), are apparently altogether unrelated. Then the natural half of the universe is assumed to be under the dominion of law, the rigid laws which rule physical antecedents and physical consequences, while the spiritual half of the universe is assumed to be under the dominion of—what? It cannot be that it

[1] It is significant that seventy-five per cent. of the college students who answered a questionnaire on the subject of prayer 'considered it a mistake to pray for a change in the weather.' Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 321.

[2] *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 463–4.

is ruled by chance, for in that case prayer could not, of course, effect anything whatever. There must be some system, some regular connexion of events, and some regular operation of forces in the spiritual world, or it would be quite impossible to effect any real causation, either by prayer, or by anything else whatever. But it is equally impossible, upon the hypothesis we are considering, that the spiritual realm should be thought of as ruled by law, for if so the laws will necessarily be as regular and as rigid as natural laws —otherwise they would not be laws at all. And if fixed laws rule the spiritual world, the fixity of law must be precisely as great a difficulty there as in the physical world. If it is law anywhere surely it is law everywhere. The fact that the universe is governed by law, if it forbids physical results to follow from prayer, equally forbids spiritual or moral results to follow from it.

The fact is that the whole conception of natural law, as popularly entertained, is beset with fallacies. First of all, there is the most unfortunate use of the same word 'law' to signify (as an eminent statesman recently said), both 'the command of a sovereign authority and the generalization of a Newton or a Darwin.'[1] The first implies a sanction which is always personal in appeal, and generally moral in quality, along with the existence of an active authority which both issues and enforces the command, and which also has personal and moral attributes.[2] Now very

[1] The Earl of Oxford, in an Essex Hall Lecture on *Free Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, June 4, 1925.

[2] Cf. James Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, pp. 539–41.

often the ideas of authority and activity, both of them demoralized and depersonalized, are unconsciously carried over into the concept of natural law, which has no right to any connotation of this kind, since it merely means a regularity of observed sequences, and cannot possibly mean anything else. This is a piece of sheer anthropomorphism on the part of scientific thinkers, such as they are fond of charging upon the theologians. The result is that there is a great deal of illogical thinking which treats natural laws as if they ordained themselves and operated themselves. But a law of any kind, natural or otherwise, must always have that which establishes and effectuates it. When you have generalized all the events in the universe into regular codes of behaviour, you have still to seek a primal, universal, active, and present cause, which originated all things in the first place, and which continues to make them behave in this singularly disciplined way. That being so, the impenitent theist will at once suggest that this ultimate cause must be conceived as intelligent and infinite, and is, indeed, the God of natural theology. But it is utterly uncritical and unphilosophical, in any case, to think of natural laws as if they were sorcerers' spells. As an eminent logician has said: 'To speak of natural laws as if the mere formula exerted a magical power over the phenomena and exacted something from them which did not follow of itself from their own nature is an empty rhetorical phrase. Laws can never be the causes of actual occurrences: they can only express the regular manner in which real things occur.' [1]

[1] Sigwart, *Logik*, ii. 2, p. 512.

What we call natural laws are, in fact, generalizations as to the way that things happen in the universe, and nothing more. As to what makes things happen in these regular sequences, or what makes them happen at all, natural laws cannot tell us anything whatever.

Then, too, the description of the laws of nature as fixed laws is singularly delusive. It is redundant, of course, since every law of nature is a fixed law. If a law were unfixed it would not be a law. But the phrase is misleading in several ways. It suggests that a natural law means invariable sequence—that precisely the same effect follows infallibly from precisely the same cause—which is right enough, so long as the law is thought of in the abstract, as existing and operating by itself. But it is often forgotten that in the life of the universe no natural law ever does actually exist or operate alone; it is always conditioned and often suspended or superseded by the existence and the operation of other laws. So that, strictly speaking, the same event in the actual life of the universe does not follow from the operation of any one law, but follows from the operation of the same combination of laws—a very important point. Moreover, speaking still more strictly, it never is the same event, that is, there never are two events in the universe that are precisely similar, for they must necessarily differ in their position in space and in time, as well as in a thousand details of their wider environment. They may be sufficiently alike in some respect for us to group them under one formula; for purposes of classification we may deliberately fix our attention

upon some general resemblance and deliberately ignore the minute differences, and so average events out into regularity. But the fixity of the law (and consequently the uniformity of nature) is not really either absolute or actual; it is merely a kind of statistical average,[1] an abstract and approximate formula—something that does not actually exist in nature, but which our minds import into our conception of nature, and which we find extraordinarily convenient in use, as a kind of working principle. If we state that the average height of Englishmen is 5 feet 7¼ inches, that does not mean that every individual male in England is precisely that height. But it is a useful statement which compresses into a single formula the almost innumerable differences of height that actually exist. And so a natural law compresses the almost infinite diversity of events into a statement of uniformity, so far as that particular aspect of events is concerned. But it does not mean that there is any absolute fixity or any absolute uniformity in the actual events, for in those actual events there is, as a matter of fact, a practically infinite mutability and multiplicity.

And then, again, the notion of fixity is often unconsciously carried over (by what logicians call the fallacy of composition) from a single natural law to the entire system of natural laws, so that it becomes the thought of a universal fixity of events within the universe; the conception of fate, in fact. The fixity which we attribute to a solitary natural law, when considered as a pure abstraction in the mind, we proceed

[1] Cf. James Ward, *Realm of Ends*, p. 78.

to transfer to the entire combination of natural laws when considered as in active operation in the universe. It is as if we should transfer the fixity of the rule as to one particular movement of a pawn in chess to the whole game, and proceed to think that as the one piece in one particular position and at one particular moment can only move in one specified direction, so the whole game can only issue in one specified result. That is to ignore the fact that the operation of changing combinations of fixed laws can give an absolutely fluid result. While each piece has a determined value, and can only move in a determined direction when conditioned by the presence and position of other pieces, the whole game involves so many different combinations of value and of direction that it may end in thousands of different ways. So while all the laws of nature are fixed laws, the possible combinations of those laws are so numberless, and change so constantly, that they produce results of infinite variety. If there be a God, and if He answers prayer, He can order the limitless interactions of natural laws and natural forces, without any exercise of miraculous power, so as to produce whatever result He wills, and if He wills it, the result for which we pray. If man can rearrange the interactions of physical laws so as to produce different results (and that is what all human activity amounts to) surely God can do the same, on the infinite scale? The persistence of this fallacy of fixity is amazing. It is always irritating, but never more so than when found in that species of apologetics that is pathetically eager to prove its candour by conceding in advance everything that the writer imagines science has ever demanded.

There is not even the charm of novelty about this piece of muddled thinking, for it is precisely the same fallacy that underlies the dilemma which Pope proposed (and which he borrowed from Wollaston) nearly two hundred years ago :

> Think we, like some weak prince, the Eternal Cause
> Prone for his favourites to reverse his laws ?
> When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
> Shall gravitation cease, if you go by ? [1]

The implied supposition is that it is irrevocably fixed beforehand both that the rock is to fall on that particular spot at that particular moment, and that you are to pass that particular spot at that particular moment. Then it is demanded if you expect a miracle to save you, a supernatural suspension of the law of gravitation in your personal interest. There is no need for any intelligent believer in providence to expect any such incredible interference: he does not believe that any such solution of the problem is necessary, because he does not believe that the problem exists. He does not believe, that is to say, in an unalterable fate which has predetermined every event in the universe, and so he does not believe that there is any absolute necessity that the rock should fall precisely then and there, and that you should be passing precisely then and there. If it be the will of God that you should not encounter that particular danger, there are thousands of ways in which you may escape it, without any miracle at all. A spell of hard frost may delay the fall, or a spell of wet weather may

[1] *Essay on Man*, iv. 121–8.

hasten it; your watch may have gained or lost, so that you pass the spot a few moments before or a few moments after the landslide has happened; an attack of influenza may prevent you passing the place for days, or a broken leg may prevent you passing it for weeks. There are literally thousands upon thousands of such contingencies which, without ever going beyond the natural, may effectively prevent that particular collocation of circumstances which would result in your being crushed by the fall of rock. The supposed difficulty, like all similar ones, really depends upon the assumption of a fixed fate, governing all the events of the universe. The problem is presented as if it turned upon the invariability of natural laws, but it does not; it turns upon an assumed determinism. If that determinism is a right interpretation of the universe, it certainly makes an end of all belief in providence and prayer, but it must not be forgotten that it also makes an end of many other things as well. For the problem of prayer and providence is in fact a part of a larger question, and our attitude toward it depends upon our final philosophy—upon the view we take of existence as a whole. What is primal and what is ultimate in the universe? What is the interpretation of the whole of things, if indeed there is any interpretation at all? Is the sum of existence energized and directed by purpose and intelligence, or is it not? If it is, there can be nothing which makes it impossible for prayer to be heard and to be answered; if it is not, then indeed there is no place for prayer, but there is no place for religion or for morality in any real sense of the words.

It comes to this,—when the universal range and rigidity of natural law is granted, in the most unreserved way, the ultimate question remains, *How are the infinite combinations of natural laws, changing as they do from moment to moment, determined, and what determines them?*—for those combinations and the consequences which follow from them are strictly innumerable and incalculable. Only three theories as to the cause and the mode seem to be possible—materialism and determinism; or theism and determinism; or theism and freedom. Either all the innumerable permutations of laws are predetermined from the beginning of the universe by the original constitution of matter; or they are predetermined from eternity by a supreme intelligence; or they are determinable and determined from moment to moment, so to speak, by a supreme intelligence.

Now the first hypothesis seems to be strictly incredible when you try to think out the details of it. Every particular combination of laws in the universe is supposed to be determined by the preceding combination, and so backwards to the beginning, so that everything is really predetermined by the innate character of matter in its earliest state. Now to suppose that the original matter of the universe—the diffused mass of gaseous particles that composed the original nebula from which all the worlds were evolved—fortuitously contained within itself a system of predetermined causation which comprised every single event, mental, moral, and spiritual, as well as physical, that has ever happened or ever will happen, is implicitly to endow matter with all the infinite attributes that a theist

ever predicated of God. It is to credit matter with a species of omniscience, for example. For if matter be the real and active cause of all the almost infinite knowledge which humanity already possesses, and which is increasing from day to day, it must somehow possess infinite knowledge in itself. Now to say that unconscious matter is the infinite cause of knowledge is very nearly using words without meaning. Probably all that the words do really mean is that the materialist will not accept a theistic explanation of the universe at any price, and prefers the most obstinate paradoxes about matter instead. But if it could be proved that all existence developed automatically out of primitive matter, the incorrigible theist would promptly claim that such marvellous matter as this must be said to have a soul, and that this soul must be called God. It does not affect the argument if instead of matter we say force, or *élan vital*, or what you please : whatever the primitive principle of the universe may be, it must contain within itself the secret and the potentiality, at least, of all the illimitable intelligence, and all the moral and spiritual qualities, that are exhibited in the whole life of the universe. The second hypothesis is that of a purely transcendent God, with the addition of a doctrine of predestination, a creed which, if it was ever seriously held, must be quite superannuated by this time of day. Even on this theory, however, there is no insuperable difficulty as to prayer. For if God foreordained all things from eternity He also foreknew the prayers that would ascend from the hearts of men, and the believer in prayer would say, like

Eckhart: 'God saw all things in His first eternal glance—if indeed we may speak of a first glance. He saw the humblest prayer that would be offered, and saw withal which prayers He would hear. He saw that to-morrow thou wilt cry unto Him and earnestly entreat Him, and not to-morrow will God hear thy prayer, for He heard it in His eternity, before ever thou wast made man.'[1] The real objection to that view, however, is that it is Deism—that it supposes that God made the world and ordained its whole history, and then retired from it, as a watchmaker might make a watch and wind it up, and then leave it to go by itself until it ran down. Such a conception is far from doing justice to the genuinely and characteristically Christian view of the relation of God to the world, which is represented by the third hypothesis—that of an active and immanent Deity, in whom we live and move and have our being, who did not merely once create the world, but who sustains, directs, actuates, and vitalizes it from moment to moment. This is modern and rational theism.

When once the theistic position is reached and held, one would think that there would remain no more objections of the kind we have been considering. There seems to be one, however. It is the argument which we have seen used by timid apologists (who are apparently seeking a religious sanction for conceding what they conceive to be the scientific objection to prayer) that it is blasphemous to think of prayer as altering the will of God.[2] Now it is doubtless blas-

[1] Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 487.

[2] A. L. Lilley, *Prayer in Christian Theology*, p. 7.

phemous to think of prayer, or anything else, altering the will of God in the universal and ultimate sense. But what does the will of God mean, in that sense, except a general and final purpose of good? To think of the will of God as meaning that every separate event in the universe is rigidly ordained is, of course, an absolute denial of all human freedom and consequently of the very meaning of morality. It is fundamental to all religion and all morality to believe that man should be able, within limits, to do a thing or not to do it, to do the good deed that is in accordance with the will of God, or to do the evil deed that is the sheer denial and defiance of the will of God, to fulfil or frustrate the will of God, in the Apostle's phrase. It is equally fundamental to believe that in the long run and in the last resort the will of God must prevail over the defiance of men, and that out of all evil the larger good will be finally wrought.

Now if we believe, as all Christians must do, that the will of God, in the intermediate sense, may be thwarted by sin, and that what God purposes may have to be wrought out in another way because of man's defiance, surely it is reasonable to believe that, in a similar sense, though in an opposite direction, the will of God may be influenced by prayer, and that the final purpose of God may be accomplished in another way because of man's desire and petition and trust? Is it to be thought that I may divert the course of events in an evil sense by my sin, and that I may not divert it in a good sense by my supplications, so that by a man's sin, but not by

a man's prayer, the general purpose of God may be fulfilled along a different line of happenings? That is a very insolent anomaly, one would think, for any religious mind to accept. What is best in us must surely have as real and as active a relation to the will of God as what is worst in us. And if we believe that our wills may actively affect the will of God by defiance and sin, we must surely believe that our wills may actively affect the will of God by supplication and trust. Unless we do believe that, it would seem that there is little sense in pretending that we believe in prayer at all. However that may be, it is certain that the human spirit will not be really satisfied for long with a conception of prayer which makes it mere self-suggestion, and which leaves the whole of life in the shadow of inexorable fate, or something very like it. If it comes to be thought that all that a man's prayer can do is to persuade his own will into a more submissive acceptance of what is irrevocably destined, and what neither his most earnest supplication nor anything else in the world can change in the smallest degree, we do not believe that prayer will continue for long to hold a place in the life of men [1]; and when prayer is no longer believed in as a real activity of the spirit which has real results not only in the sphere of self, but also in relation to the universe and to the will of God, religion will not long survive.

In short, there are not, and in the very nature of the

[1] 'The question on which everything turns is whether we are helplessly yoked to an inexorable necessity, or whether a God exists who rules and governs, and whose power to compel Nature we can move by prayer.' Harnack, *What is Christianity?* p. 30.

case there cannot be, any scientific or philosophical difficulties in the way of believing in prayer exactly as the simplest piety does, except such difficulties as arise out of an assumed determinism; and such an assumption makes not only prayer, but all moral and religious conceptions of life, absolutely impossible.

# V

# THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

Impotent words, weak lines, that strive in vain—
  In vain, alas! to tell so heavenly sight—
So heavenly sight, as none can greater feign,
  Feign what he can, that seems of greatest might.

Giles Fletcher, *Christ's Victory and Triumph*.

## V

## THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

A QUESTIONNAIRE on religious belief was recently circulated among its readers by a leading London journal. When the results were summarized some suggestive facts emerged, and this among others. A considerable number of those who accepted the Apostles' Creed did so with reservations and doubts as to the Resurrection of the Body. This is not altogether surprising, for there have been numerous articles and letters in the religious press in late years which indicate that many people in the Church regard this particular belief as no longer tenable. Some years ago Dr. Clifford, the veteran Baptist, actually objected to the teaching of the Apostles' Creed in schools, on the ground (along with other reasons) that most Christian people no longer believe in the Resurrection of the Body.

Now it scarcely needs to be said that honesty ought always to come first in confessional matters, and that if we no longer believe in this particular doctrine we ought to delete the article from our version of the Creed. And it is equally obvious that if any facts have been discovered that make this belief impossible or absurd, we ought at once to recognize the situation. But it does not appear, upon an examination of the question, that there is any difficulty except what

arises from a defective and materialistic interpretation of the doctrine. It is a matter for surprise that some responsible teachers of the Church have taken such a gross view of the matter, and have failed so completely to understand the subtle and vital truth that is really involved.

The article in the Creed really derives from three sources—the doctrine of the resurrection as developed in the later days of Judaism ; the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and the Apostle Paul's doctrine of the spiritual body.

1. In the earlier period of Hebrew religion there was scarcely any thought about a future life, at least in any such sense as we attach to it. The religious interest centred in the people of God as a nation, rather than in the individual. The conception of the Day of the Lord, and the whole of the Messianic hope are, of course, eschatological in character, but the thought is concerned with the kingdom of God on earth rather than with the fate of the individual, or with a life beyond death. As far as the individual was concerned the righteous man fulfilled his destiny in this world—he had health and length of days ; he had many sons and daughters to perpetuate his name ; his flocks and herds increased ; all went well with him, and when he died his memory was blessed. And so with the unrighteous man—he was afflicted, and he died in the midst of his years ; he was childless, or his children died before him ; he came to poverty and shame, and his memory perished. Such, in the broadest outline, was the early view. But the facts of life did not always correspond with it, and a problem emerged.

Sometimes the wicked man prospered greatly, while the good man was sorely afflicted. That, of course, is the issue dramatically set forth in the book of Job. But that was not the main factor in developing a doctrine of the future life. It was rather a deepening sense of the reality of religious experience, along with an increasing emphasis upon the value and responsibility of the individual. There was the deep intuition in the minds of religious men that since the righteousness of God is eternal, there cannot be a final separation between the righteous man and the righteous God: the fellowship with God which godly men have in this world must remain unbroken in death. When the Captivity came, and national life existed no longer, the religious unit became more and more the individual, and the more personal hope was accentuated. 'But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, for He shall receive me.' So the belief grew that the *dénouement* of life is not here, but beyond the grave. At first it took the form of a belief in the reanimation or resurrection of the dead. This appears first of all in a definite and decided way in Daniel, xii, 2: 'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' The belief was strengthened in later days when many Jews died for the sake of their faith. It may be taken to be thoroughly established in the last century before Christ. That belief in a resurrection of the dead was accepted and affirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Then there is the supreme fact of our Lord's bodily resurrection from the dead. Taking the evan-

gelical record as it stands—passing over critical questions that would fill a volume, and assuming for the moment that we have in the Gospels a record of fact—it seems plain that the body which rose from the dead was the same body that died, and yet that it was strangely different. It was the same—the disciples recognized the Lord, though apparently with some hesitation at first, on some occasions; the body bore the marks of the wounds in the hands and the side; it was the body that died on the Cross and lay in the tomb. Yet it was different—it could appear and disappear; it could pass through closed doors. It seems manifest (if we believe that the Resurrection happened at all) that the risen body of the Lord was on 'the dizzy verge, the dazzling line, Where mortal and immortal merge, And human dies divine.' It would appear (if it may be said with all reverence) that it was a material body in the very process of being dematerialized; risen but not yet glorified; with some material properties not yet wholly lost, and a spiritual character not yet fully acquired. That spiritualization, we may reverently suppose, became complete at the Ascension.

3. Then, developed from what has gone before, there is the Apostle Paul's doctrine (in I Corinthians xv, 35–58) of a spiritual body. The essential points in it seem to be these—as there is a natural body (*σῶμα ψυχικόν*) so there is a spiritual body (*σῶμα πνευματικόν*), and these are related, as the seed is related to the plant, yet they are absolutely different—as different as the small, brown, oval seed is in appearance from the long, green, erect stalk. The natural body is earthy, corrupt,

dishonoured, the spiritual body is heavenly, incorruptible, glorious. If the one is a 'muddy vesture of decay,' the other is an indescribable investiture of the soul with purity and immortality.

Now to assume, in the face of this teaching of St. Paul, that the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body means the mere reanimation of this material body (a thing in any case manifestly impossible) is sheer perversity. In the best thought of the Church it never meant that. Doubtless it would be easy enough to quote crude expressions along that line from some mediaeval writers and some modern literalists. It would be easy also to quote such language from some of the Latin Fathers, most of all from Tertullian, though Tertullian stands quite apart in such a matter as this. The curious realism which characterizes him, even to the extent of teaching that there is a subtle corporeity in God, is a thing by itself. Still, even Augustine uses language which suggests a mere reanimation of the material body. It is not to be denied that there was a materialistic, as well as a spiritual interpretation of this doctrine. But why should any truth in religion be discarded because it has sometimes been expressed in a wretchedly materialist and mechanical way? The very statement of the Apostle that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God has condemned any such gross misunderstanding from the first. And always the higher tradition of Christian theology has held to the more spiritual interpretation of the truth. No one need suspect that this is a modern attempt to evade a difficulty. Origen, the greatest of the Greek Fathers, was born about the year 185:

his great-grandparents may easily have lived in the days of the Apostles. He scoffs at Celsus, his heathen opponent, for supposing that any intelligent Christian believed in the reanimation of the material body. 'Celsus next assails the doctrine of the resurrection, a high and difficult doctrine, and one which more than others requires a high and advanced degree of wisdom to set forth how worthy it is of God; and how sublime a truth it is which teaches us that there is a seminal principle lodged in that which the Scriptures describe as *the tabernacle* of the soul, *in which the righteous do groan, not that they would be unclothed, but clothed upon.* Celsus ridicules this doctrine because he does not understand it, and because he has learned it from ignorant persons (*ἀπὸ ἰδιωτῶν*) who were unable to support it on any reasonable grounds.' Then Origen goes on to argue that the soul clothes itself in different forms at different times. When it comes into the world at birth it casts off the integuments which it needed as an embryo; and before doing this puts on another body suited to its life on earth. So again, he says, when the earthly house of the body is dissolved, the Scripture teaches us that we shall be *clothed upon with a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* 'Behold, then, to what a prospect Scripture encourages us to look, when it speaks to us of being clothed with incorruption and immortality, which are (as it were) vestments which will not suffer those who are clothed with them to come to corruption and death. Thus far I have taken the liberty of referring to this subject,' Origen concludes, 'in answer to one who assails the doctrine of the resurrection without understanding

it, and who, simply because he knew nothing about it, made it the object of contempt and ridicule.' [1]

In another place Origen refers to the subject again. He says that Celsus has ' ridiculed at great length the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh,' and goes on to state that ' neither we, nor the Holy Scriptures, assert that with the same bodies, without a change to a higher condition, " those who were long dead shall arise from the earth and live again " ' (quoting the words of Celsus), ' for in so speaking Celsus makes a false charge against us.' Then he goes on to expound the Apostle's words about the spiritual body, and says that ' though the soul may require a body for the sake of moving from place to place ' (*διὰ τὰς τοπικὰς μεταβάσεις*) it will not be such a body as we can conceive, but a form of incorruption and immortality, in which the victory of death will be annihilated.[2]

In still another passage, expounding Psalm i, 5, he argues that even in this life the body is not always the same, for it alters its aspect, and the very matter which composes it is changed from year to year, but what constitutes its peculiar essence as an organ of the soul is an *εἶδος χαρακτηρίζον*, and it is this distinct impress of identity, so to speak, restored in a higher form, that constitutes the spiritual body.[3]

Now this is clearly in the right direction. What the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body really means is a belief in personal immortality—with a difference. Most people who have any real belief in immortality

[1] *Contra Celsum*, vii. 32 (Migne, *Pat. Gr.* xi. 1465 B–1468 A).
[2] *Ibid.*, v. 18, 19 (Migne, xi. 1205 D–1209 B).
[3] *Selecta in Psalmos*, Ps. i (Migne, xii. 1094 B, C).

would accept a statement of faith as to the survival of the self. But more than that is suggested by this belief in the spiritual body, and here is really the whole significance of the dogma. How can the survival of self be conceived if it is merely the survival of pure, undistinguished, undifferentiated spirit?

Formless spirituality is something utterly inconceivable by the human mind. It may be stated, as the existence of nothingness may be stated, but it surely cannot be represented to the mind. We know nothing of spirit, as a matter of fact, except as enshrined and expressed in bodily form. We believe that God is a spirit, but if that were all we knew of God we should know nothing of Him whatever. All our knowledge of God comes to us through the fact of the universe and through the fact of Christ. We know God, first of all, through the existence of the universe. It is an embodiment of His thought and His will, and therefore, in some sense, of Himself. The expression of the mind and purpose of God in the sum of existence is gravely discounted and distorted by the existence of evil, but even when we remember that, the fact remains that for every one who believes in God, the universe (or all that is good in it) is a revelation of God, by way of an actual embodiment of His eternal purpose. As the *Erdgeist* says to *Faust*: *So schaff' ich am sausenden Webstuhl der Zeit Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid.* In the great phrase of the Apostle, that which is invisible in God (*τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ*), that is, His eternal power and Deity, are seen in the things that are made (*τοῖς ποιήμασι*).

Again, it is the very essence of the Christian faith to

believe that God became man, that is to say, that God embodied Himself in Christ. Practically all who would care to call themselves Christians believe that as there is a partial and preliminary revelation of God in the universe, there is also a full, final, unique, and personal revelation of God in Christ, and that it is there, and only there, that we find God made known to us in a way that really satisfies the soul of man. There is a revelation of God in nature, and there is a revelation of God in history. The one means that God has enshrined Himself in the universe. The other means that God has embodied Himself in a man. All our knowledge of God, therefore, comes to us by way of the fact that God has given to men a visible, definite, bodily expression of Himself in the world and in Christ.

Again, it is of the essence of religion to believe that man is a spirit. But the human spirit always lives in a body, and always expresses itself through a body. The soul, so far as our experience goes, must possess an organ, and never exists bare, bodiless, formless—'for of the soule the bodie forme doth take; For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make.' We assuredly cannot represent to the mind the existence of any finite spirit, in this or in any other world, which does not possess (whether as bestowed upon it, or as derived from itself) some form, however immaterial, however spiritualized, however glorified, however remote from all our thought—still, some character of identity, some differentiation which makes it more than formless existence.

It is certain that no doctrine of immortality will

really satisfy the religious consciousness for long which does not mean the survival of identity. An immortality of influence—to 'live again in minds made better by our presence'—is little more than an empty form of words. An absorption into the Absolute is certainly a very different conception, and may be made to accord with the Christian hope, if it is interpreted in the fashion of Porphyry's doctrine that 'particular souls subsist, as well as the Universal Soul, independently of bodies, without the unity of the Universal Soul absorbing the multiplicity of the particular souls, or the multiplicity of particular souls splitting up the unity of the Universal Soul. Particular souls are distinct without being separate; they are united to each other without being confused, and without making the Universal Soul a simple aggregate.' Or, in other words (as Dr. Inge suggests that a modern philosopher might attempt to explain Porphyry's doctrine), we may think of 'an infinite number of *foci* in one infinite consciousness.'[1]

This is practically the doctrine of some of the mystics, and notably of Eckhart. Writing of the soul that has become one with God, he says: 'In this exaltation the soul has lost itself and is flowing utterly into the unity of the divine nature. Now one may ask, how is it with this lost soul? does it find itself or not? I will say that it seems to me that it does find itself, at the point where every intelligent existence (*ieglich vernünftic wesen*) knows itself with itself. For though it sinks utterly into the unity of the divine being, it can never reach the bottom. Therefore God

[1] W. R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, i, pp. 215–6.

has left it one little point where it turns upon itself, and finds itself, and knows itself to be a creature.' [1]

In these conceptions, however, the very point at issue is safeguarded, in some measure. The soul is still somehow *itself*, though it be somehow lost in God. On the other hand, if the spirit is thought of as being utterly lost in the Deity, as a drop is lost in the ocean, what religious value does the belief retain? There is really no difference at all, from the side of our human experience, between being totally merged in the Absolute, and being annihilated. In both cases *I* cease to exist, whatever the course of universal existence may be.

It is quite unfair to argue, as some writers have done, that this desire for the survival of identity is the apotheosis of egotism. It is not that we desire to exist to the exclusion of other personalities, or for any selfish reason, but that if human spirits cease to exist and to be themselves, the whole of existence becomes an anticlimax. The moral and spiritual worth of our life depends upon an eternal quality. The noblest desires and resolves and efforts of our life are all penetrated by a deep conviction that these experiences do not begin and end in themselves, that they do not find their source and their goal merely in time, that their entire significance is not limited by a few fleeting years, but that what I am and what I do does matter universally and everlastingly. If the whole value and the whole result of human life pass away with the end of this planet (and the life of the earth is but a moment in eternity), does anything

[1] Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 387.

really matter much? That is the real root of the desire for survival; it is bound up with the moral significance and the spiritual worth of our lives. As Walt Whitman characteristically wrote: 'If worms and rats end us, then Alarum! we are betrayed!'

Now how can the survival of personality be represented to the mind except as meaning that the disembodied spirit must still possess some definite identity, something which makes it distinguishable from other spirits, and, so to speak, recognizable by other spirits? something which we can scarcely express otherwise than as spiritual form? We are driven to paradox, as St. Paul was: *πνεῦμα* and *σῶμα* are absolute opposites, and yet he found himself forced to write of a *σῶμα πνευματικόν*. The difficulty lies in the very nature of the thing of which we are striving to think, and in the poverty of language—as the poet found himself compelled to write, 'if shape it might be called that shape had none.' There is no suggestion of anything material, or tangible, or visible, and yet if we are to think of an individual spirit, we must believe that there is something individual about it. That individuality, that distinctness of entity, that separate, differentiated, recognizable character—what is it to be called if not spiritual form, or a spiritual body? 'Eternal form shall still divide The eternal soul from all beside, And I shall know him when we meet.' The Apostle and the English poet are feeling after the same truth, and each is expressing it as well as he can.

It may be urged that this really amounts only to mythology, or to symbolism at the best. The answer

is that there is precisely as much and precisely as little—whichever you like—of the mythological and the symbolical in it as there is in many doctrines of philosophy and science. The man of science who writes of 'laws' and 'currents' and 'attractions' is as frankly anthropomorphic as any theologian ever was, for in those terms he is simply comparing the rules of the behaviour of things in general with an Act of Parliament, and some particular facts in the behaviour of electrical force and of material bodies with a stream of water and with a man pulling a rope. The fact is that you cannot escape metaphor and myth, either in language or in thought. However you strive for logical exactness in your conceptions and for dry precision in your statements, you cannot escape either symbolism of thought or symbolism of language. The only thing to do is to use the symbols, and to remember that they are symbols. If any one argues that to speak of a spiritual form and of an immaterial body is only an attempt to represent to the mind by symbol and metaphor and paradox what (if it really exists at all) is beyond representation, we should agree—and cheerfully persist in the attempt. For if we believe in immortality this is the only way in which we can represent an immortality that really means anything at all. And if immortality in any real sense is a fact there must be that quality in it, however far beyond our present powers of comprehension, which really corresponds to these symbols, 'dreams that are true, yet enigmatical, For the belongings of that heavenly state Save through such symbols, come not home to thee.' They are symbols, doubtless, but they are

symbols which seek to express what otherwise would be inexpressible—thoughts of the human mind and longings of the human spirit which lie too deep for tears, and which the Christian soul believes to be answered by eternal realities.

# VI
# ECKHART

Eckharts Theologie unterscheidet sich nicht von einer aus rein philosophischem Antriebe erwachsenen Metaphysik.

Lasson, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 345.

## VI

## ECKHART

MEISTER ECKHART has an almost legendary importance in the history of mysticism. His place as the earliest and the most eminent of the great line of German mystics, his extraordinary reputation and wide influence in his own time, his condemnation in the last days of his life as a heretic, and the resuscitation of his fame early in the last century, when the most extravagant opinions as to his importance in the history of philosophy and of religion were held—all these things have helped to lend a glamour to his name. Eckhart was neither as great a religious thinker nor as great a philosophical genius as has often been claimed in the past, but he is a very interesting and important person, nevertheless.

Heinrich Eckhart was born about the year 1260. It was a matter of dispute for a long time with his biographers as to whether he belonged to Saxony or to Strasbourg. The fact that he is said to have been Prior at Erfurt always pointed to the former conclusion, but the matter has been definitely decided by Denifle's discovery of two documents. One, dated 1305, relates to some benefactions given to the Cistercian convent of the Holy Cross at Gotha by *dominus Eckhardus miles dictus de Hochheim bone memorie,*

evidently a deceased relative of the great mystic. It bears the seals of the convent and of ' the venerable Father Master Eckhart of Paris, Provincial-Prior of the Order of Preachers in Saxony.' The other document, of about the same period, contains a Latin sermon preached by Eckhart before the Augustinians at Paris, and ends with a note to the effect that the sermon is by *magister Echardus de Hochheim*. These references leave no doubt that Eckhart belonged to the village of Hochheim, a few miles from Gotha.

We know nothing as to when Eckhart became a Dominican, except that, according to the constitutions of the Order, he must have been more than eighteen years of age at the time. After his novitiate, and his earlier studies, which would be in the convent at Erfurt, he probably went to the *studium generale* at Cologne, where Albert the Great had taught until his death in 1280, and where St. Thomas Aquinas had studied and also taught for a time.

After this we find Eckhart (if the title of one of Pfeiffer's manuscripts is to be trusted) in office as Prior of Erfurt and Vicar-general of Thuringia (*Vicarius von Düringen, Prior von Erfort, Bruoder Eckehart Predier Ordens*). This was probably before 1298.

Next comes a fact in his life which is established beyond all possible doubt—his sojourn at the University of Paris. We learn from contemporary manuscripts that *frater Aychardus, Theutonicus*, became a Master in Theology there in 1302. The next year the General Chapter of the Dominicans, at Besançon, divided Germany into two provinces—*Teutonia*, comprising Austria and most of southern Germany, the

Rhine country, and Brabant ; and *Saxonia*, comprising most of central and northern Germany, and Holland. The Provincial Chapter of Erfurt, the first held in the new province of Saxony, elected Eckhart Provincial-Prior in 1303, and the General Chapter held at Toulouse in 1304 confirmed the election. Three years later the General Chapter, having dismissed the Provincial-Prior of Bohemia from his office, appointed Eckhart Vicar-general for that province also, while he still retained his appointment in Saxony. Then in 1311 the General Chapter, held at Naples, relieved him of his post as Provincial-Prior of Saxony, and sent him to teach theology at Paris. We know nothing as to the details of this second sojourn in France except that it did not last very long, for in 1314 he was already established as a famous preacher in Strasbourg. Probably he was in Strasbourg from about 1312 until about 1317.

It has been thought by several of Eckhart's biographers in the past that he was more or less involved in the condemnation, by the Bishop of Strasbourg, in 1317, of the heresy of the Beghards and ' Schwestrones ' in that diocese, and Preger assumed that Eckhart left the city in consequence. This has been supported by a passage in a contemporary letter from the General of the Dominicans to the friars of Worms and Mayence, in which he states that there have been grave accusations against ' brother Eckhard, our prior at Frankfort ' of *mala familiaritas*. The words have been taken to mean intercourse with heretics, but Denifle seems to have established the fact that, in Dominican usage, the phrase meant relations with

women.[1] Now Eckhart always had a moral reputation that was beyond reproach. There is no other indication connecting him with Frankfort, and if he had been the person meant, the description of him would almost certainly have been that of *magister sacrae theologiae*, and not the simple *frater*. We know also that there were at least three other Dominicans in Germany at this period whose name was Eckhart, and it seems probable that the accused person was one of these.

As a matter of fact Eckhart appears to have left Strasbourg for Cologne, in order to become a teacher in the *studium generale* of the Order there, and the very fact that he was preferred to such a responsible office would seem to indicate that he was quite unsuspected of heresy at that time.

It was while he was at Cologne that he fell under the accusation of heresy, and it was there, while the charge was still hanging over him, that he died. The action against him was taken by the Archbishop of Cologne, and was first instituted, apparently, in 1326, for the earliest document that survives—the documents are in the archives of the Vatican—is a protest by Eckhart in which he complains that the process has been delayed, and ought to have been brought to a close before the middle of the year, *ante anni medietatem ;* this is dated January 24, 1327. He also protests that the accusation is contrary to truth, defamatory of himself and of the Order, and dependent upon the denunciations of some of his brethren who are them-

[1] Denifle, *Actenstücke zu Meister Eckhart's Process*, p. 619, in *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, xxix (1885).

selves of evil fame ; and that he has shown himself at all times ready to submit to the judgement of the Church.

The promoters of the charge seem, in fact, to have been two Dominicans who had been under discipline themselves, and who, in a spirit of revenge, accused Nicholas of Strasbourg, the Vicar-general of the Order in Germany, as well as Eckhart. Nicholas was excommunicated, but shortly afterward absolved and restored. Nicholas protested that the Archbishop of Cologne had no jurisdiction over the Dominicans, and appealed to the Holy See. Following this, Eckhart signed a Latin declaration before a notary, on February 13, 1327, which was read in the Dominican Church, and afterward expounded by Eckhart himself in German, in which he protested his detestation of all heresy, and took occasion to explain particularly two statements as to which he had been accused. The first was that he had said *minimum meum digitum creasse omnia*, which he declared he had spoken of the finger of the child Jesus. The second was that he had taught that there was something uncreated in the soul ; this he said he had maintained only hypothetically, i.e. as true if the soul is rightly regarded as *intellectus*. In spite of this *démarche* the prosecution went on, and the appeal to the Holy See was rejected as frivolous by the archiepiscopal commissioners. This is the last that we know of the process at Cologne.

Eckhart died during this year. The fact is rendered fairly certain by a consensus of early evidence.

The process against him went forward at the Papal court, and ended with the Bull of John XXII, *In*

*agro dominico*, dated March 27, 1329, in which twenty-eight propositions extracted from his writings are condemned, seventeen as definitely heretical, and the remaining eleven as *male sonantes, temerarios, et suspectos de heresi.* The Bull states that at the end of his life Eckhart recanted twenty-six of these propositions. The Archbishop of Cologne was directed to publish the Bull in his diocese, in order that the heretical doctrine should not root itself more deeply in the minds of those who had listened to Eckhart's preaching.

Does the retractation mentioned in the Bull refer to his statement of February 13? Probably not. For one thing that was not a retractation properly so called: no authority had required him to recant, for Nicholas of Strasbourg, the only ecclesiastical authority competent to act in such a way up to the time the cause was remitted to the Holy See, believed Eckhart innocent of heresy. It was a general statement to the effect that his teaching had been misunderstood and misrepresented, and that, as a good Catholic, he was prepared to recant any doctrine that proved contrary to the teaching of the Church. But the Bull speaks explicitly of Eckhart having recanted twenty-six articles which he admitted having taught and which are condemned. It looks as if there was an express recantation later than February 13, the existence of which is only known to us by the reference in the Bull.

The writings of Eckhart, so far as they have been available up to now, consist of a large number of sermons in the vernacular, which are not directly

from his own pen, but are reports and summaries written by his hearers. He preached in many places and to all sorts of people, to the laity, to clerics, to Beguines, and most of all, perhaps, in the convents. There was an intense spiritual life in the convents of the time, and a deep interest in mystical teaching, especially amongst the Dominican sisters. It is to the anxious care with which these religious women recorded the utterances of their spiritual counsellors that we owe the preservation of many, if not most, of Eckhart's sermons.

The first collection of Eckhart's sermons was printed, along with the sermons of Tauler, at Leipzig in 1498. Three other editions appeared during the following century. The first critical studies of Eckhart, including the striking one by Martensen, depended upon one or other of these editions. Then, in 1857, Pfeiffer issued his *Meister Eckhart*—a collection of sermons, tracts, and fragments, based upon the collation of a large number of manuscripts. Pfeiffer intended to supplement this with a historical introduction, a glossary, notes, and various appendices—a design which, unhappily, was never fulfilled. But Pfeiffer's work remains the standard edition of Eckhart's writings to this day.

Passing over the work of Preger, Sievers, Wackernagel, Bach and Jostes, each of whom added something to the *corpus* of Eckhart's writings, the most important contributions in recent days to our knowledge of the great mystic's life and works have been made by H. Denifle, and most of all by his discovery of parts of Eckhart's Latin works.

Nicholas of Cusa, in the *Apologia doctae ignorantiae*, had spoken of many expositions of Scripture by Eckhart, particularly an exposition of St. John's Gospel, as well as of many sermons and disputations of his. The Abbot Trithemius had given a list of some of Eckhart's Latin writings (in most cases quoting the *incipit*) which comprised expositions of Genesis, Exodus, Ecclesiasticus, Canticles, and St. John's Gospel. These Latin writings were lost, until Denifle's discovery of two manuscripts containing various fragments of them. In 1880 he found a manuscript in the library at Erfurt containing parts of Eckhart's great work, the *opus tripartitum*. The three parts of this were first, the *opus generalium propositionum*, containing an immense number of philosophical and theological propositions divided into fourteen tractates; second, the *opus questionum*, dealing with many questions of the same kind and in the same order as those dealt with in the *Summa theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas; third, the *opus expositionum*, which gives expositions of some passages of Scripture which are of special interest. The scheme of the book is thus, in the first part, to set forth a thesis, in the second to develop and discuss it, and in the third to furnish it with arguments from Scripture. All this is outlined in the general prologue, which is contained in the Erfurt manuscript, along with the prologues to the second and third parts, and some fragments of the Biblical exposition.

Then in 1886 Denifle discovered a manuscript in the library of the Hospital of St. Nicholas at Cues, the institution which had been founded at his native village, in 1453, by Cardinal Nicholas Khrypffs,

known as Nicholas of Cusa. The manuscript is dated 1444, and it contains the general prologue to the *opus tripartitum*, the prologue to the *opus propositionum*, commentaries on Genesis, Exodus, Ecclesiasticus, St. John's Gospel, and the Lord's Prayer, a collection of Latin sermons, and a copy of the articles extracted from Eckhart's writings and condemned by the Holy See. Though these manuscripts only give us fragments of Eckhart's great work, they are enough to put the whole of his doctrine in rather a new light.

That new aspect is, broadly, that it is now realized that Eckhart is fundamentally a scholastic, and indeed a disciple of St. Thomas Aquinas. Eckhart's whole doctrine as to the world of ideas in the mind of God, for example, is borrowed directly from the Angelic Doctor, and the most important passages on this subject in his writings are translated almost word for word from the *Summa*.[1] Such considerations reduce in a salutary way the earlier estimates of Eckhart as a profoundly original philosopher. They do not, of course, cancel the fact that he really was a subtle thinker, or the fact that the later German mystics derive largely from him. Every student of mysticism must have been repeatedly impressed by the way that Tauler, Ruysbroeck, Suso, the *Theologia Germanica*, and (largely through the medium of Valentin Weigel) later mystics like Böhme and Scheffler, derive their most striking thoughts from Eckhart. He has, in addition, a real title to distinction in the fact

[1] Compare the tract, *In omnibus requiem quaesivi*, in Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, pp. 324–31 (especially pp. 324-27), with the *Summa Theologica*, i. qu. xv, art. 1–3.

that he had a very great influence upon the development of the German language by his writings in the vernacular. In fact, he has been called the creator of German prose, in the higher sense of the word.[1]

The main sources of Eckhart's doctrine are four—St. Augustine, the pseudo-Dionysius, Scotus Erigena, and St. Thomas Aquinas. There cannot be the smallest doubt about this in the mind of any one who has studied Eckhart at first hand, and who knows the sources mentioned. The influence of St. Augustine and the Areopagite has been admitted—that of the latter has perhaps been overstressed—by most scholars in the past. The very considerable debt of Eckhart to Erigena has certainly never been sufficiently recognized. It is only through the work of Denifle, in comparatively recent years, that Eckhart's dependence upon St. Thomas Aquinas has been established.

The whole of Eckhart's system of thought depends upon one fundamental principle, which is wearisomely reiterated in his writings—that the Godhead is pure being, and ultimately nothing else.[2] Here is the radical religious defect of his system, for he does not hesitate to say, again and again, in the most explicit terms, that God is not goodness, not love, not anything really conceivable, in the last resort,[3] but merely absolute being, a position which is certainly much

[1] Eckhart ist der Urheber einer philosophischen Prosa in Deutschland. Lasson, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 66. Eckehart ist der Schöpfer einer deutschen Prosa im höheren Sinne. Die Grenzen des Ausdruckbaren hat er in einem Masse hinausgerückt wie ausser ihm nur Goethe. Büttner, *Eckeharts Schriften und Predigten*, p. 4.

[2] Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, pp. 95, 108, 110.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 163, 264, 269, 320.

less than Christian. Many things follow from this. Absolute being is absolute unity, absolutely undifferentiated, exclusive of all otherness, and all the distinctions and opposites that exist in finite experience coalesce in that final unity. God is the essence of all that exists, but all that is separate in the phenomenal world is one in Him, or rather, is unity in Him.[1] God is thus in all and beyond all, inasmuch as things really exist only because they partake of the being of God, and yet the being of God is absolutely one, and in so far as things are separate they do not really exist: all separation, distinction, difference, is a lapse from reality because it is a lapse from that unity which is reality.[2] On the side of God all is real, and one, and eternal; on the side of the universe, whatever is real in anything is the being of God in it, but that being is not divided or separated, for all that is temporal and manifold in the world is eternal and one in God, and the temporal and manifold aspect of things is fundamentally unreal. The whole sum of things adds nothing to God, though, apart from God, nothing in the creation has any real being.[3]

Having established this as the groundwork of his system, Eckhart is able to add a more or less orthodox superstructure of theology by introducing his second fundamental principle—he distinguishes between God and the Godhead.[4] The essence of Deity is unknown and unknowable, even by Itself: this is the *natura*

[1] Jostes, *Meister Eckhart und seine Jünger*, p. 7. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, pp. 222, 232, 311, 332.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 39, 133, 487.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 115, 136, 206, 253.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 181, 531, 541.

*non naturata.* But this Nameless Nothing, of which nothing whatever can be truly said or truly thought, eternally beholds Itself, eternally becomes aware of Itself. This process is the eternal generation of the Son, the eternal utterance of the Word of God. The unnameable Deity thus eternally becomes the Father, and eternally sees Himself reflected in the Son, and the Father and the Son love one another with an eternal Love which is the Holy Spirit. Thus the Deity becomes personal (though the becoming is not temporal, but eternal) and the Trinity of Persons is the *natura naturata.*[1] Then, as with Erigena, the Trinity becomes the principle of creation, Father, Son, and Spirit being represented in many triads such as Being, Power, and Activity; or Possibility, Equality, and Union; or the Almighty, the All-wise, and the All-loving; and the ultimate essence of all things being regarded as from the Father, the created form of things as from the Son, and the energy which unites these into actual existence as from the Spirit.[2]

There is thus a double emanation, so to speak, of Deity, first into the personal God, and then, through this, into the creation. For God, as personal, is essentially creative and communicative, since that is the nature of goodness, the very character of love. God must communicate Himself: if it were possible He would communicate Himself entirely, and create His like; as far as it is possible He does reproduce Himself in all things—that is, He communicates Himself to every created thing as far as it is the nature

[1] Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, pp. 254, 497, 580, 608.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 124, 387, 497, 608.

of that thing to receive Him.[1] But it is to the human soul that He can communicate Himself most fully, for there is that in the spirit of man which is uncreated and one with God. This particular doctrine is peculiarly characteristic of Eckhart. There is a divine spark in man, which is the light of the spirit, the summit of the soul, existing not in time but in eternity, *ein fünkelin, ein lieht des geistes, daz oberste der sele daz stet in ewikeit.*[2] This is the *natura non naturata* in man, which is uncreated and is of the essence of God, and indeed is God. Since all creatures are in God, and are one in God, and the spirit of man at its apex is one with God, all things are created in man, and all are one in the *intellectus* of man. For to know anything is to become one with it, and since there is this super-sensible knowledge of the creatures in the soul of man, all the creatures are really in man, and he is the uniting point of the whole creation.[3] Hence, too, knowledge is greater than love, for it is knowledge of God by which we are united with Him.[4] Here, too, the disciplinary and practical side of Eckhart's mysticism develops itself. Since God is pure being we can only know God by stripping away all intellectual images, and finding Him as not this, not that, not love, not goodness, not the Father, not anything that can be uttered or conceived, but as mere Being. So we must know nothing, desire nothing, will nothing, and reduce ourselves to such bareness of

[1] Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, pp. 150, 230, 269, 272, 273, 419.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 59.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 183, 522.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 108, 121, 253.

being that we may be one with the bare being of Deity.[1] Then we are one with God and God is one with us, and yet our identity is not lost in God, for though the soul sinks eternally into the abyss of God, it never reaches the ground of the abyss, and so the soul still knows itself to be a creature.[2]

The most frequent characterization and criticism of Eckhart's system, from the religious standpoint, is that it is Pantheistic. It does look Pantheistic at first sight, as any mystical philosophy that stresses the unity of the Creator and the creation must do. But when it is closely examined it cannot be called Pantheistic in any proper sense of the term. For Eckhart never teaches that the innermost essence of God is wholly expressed in the universe: he never equates God and the world in such a way that it is a matter of indifference whether you say that God is all or that all is God. In fact he says expressly that the sum of things can never give you God.[3] God is in all, but it is equally true that God is beyond all, and while God gives being to the universe, the universe does not give being to God.

At the same time there is a profound ambiguity in Eckhart's teaching at this point. He never wearies of saying: *Esse est Deus, gotes eigenschaft ist wesen,*[4] and so forth. But sometimes that means that the real being of everything is the being of God, and

[1] Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, pp. 110, 263, 264.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 387.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 263: Denifle, *Meister Eckeharts lateinische Schriften*, p. 537, in *Archiv für Literatur- und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters*, ii (1886).

sometimes it means that the ideal being of everything is in God. Eckhart's own language is so subtle and so inconsistent that it is not easy to make this point plain. But he often writes as if what is real in a thing is God, as if all that it has of ultimate being is the one and eternal being of God, and all the rest, all that is multiple, and temporal, and separate, is illusion. But, on the other hand, he often says that all things exist in the thought of God, in an eternal world of ideas, as if this is the sense in which God is the essence of things, while their existence in time and space and so forth, is at once a derivation and a declension from this ideal existence in the mind of God.

This is, we think, the ultimate problem in Eckhart's doctrine. There is an irreconcileable contradiction between two strains in his teaching, the one being the mystical tendency, deriving from the Areopagite and Erigena, the other the scholastic tendency deriving from Albert the Great and St. Thomas Aquinas. There is an enormous difference (which reacts upon our whole view of the creative activity of God, and of the actual nature of the universe) between holding, on the one hand, that the real essence of all that exists is God, and that all that is in the universe, except that one ultimate essence, is unreal and delusive; and holding, on the other hand, that everything that is exists ideally in the thought of God, and that therefore all the individuality of the universe, all its differences and distinctions, with the exception of evil, really derive from His creative thought and His creative power. Eckhart expressly teaches both these views,

and therefore his whole doctrine is infected with a radical inconsistency.

Eckhart's treatment of the problem of evil is singularly slight. He teaches, like St. Augustine, Erigena, Anselm and St. Thomas Aquinas, that evil is negative. It is the absence of the good that ought to be. It always arises from self-will: it begins with an angelic will that turns away from the will of God, and seeks its own ends. This is, of course, a familiar and suggestive line of thought found in all mystical writers, but what is so striking in Eckhart (as later in Nicholas of Cusa), is that it is held with so little appreciation of the magnitude of the problem. Evil is never felt to be a terrible fact and a terrible enigma, and the superficiality of Eckhart's treatment of it reacts inevitably upon his attitude to the doctrine of redemption, which is almost painfully abstract and intellectualist. In spite of many passages of spiritual insight, the student of Eckhart cannot but feel that he has much less of really religious feeling than the great mystics who followed him, Tauler, Suso, Ruysbroeck, and the author of the *Theologia Germanica*. In fact, a prolonged study of Eckhart's writings, despite their great qualities, leaves one with the impression that his main interest was ontological rather than religious, and that while he was, as Martensen suggests, *ein gotttrunkener Mensch*,[1] it was in the same sense as Spinoza. What is dominant in Eckhart is rather an intellectual passion for the metaphysical idea of Deity than the love of a redeemed soul for the living God, revealed, once for all, in His Son.

[1] Martensen, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 33.

# VII

# THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

Ubi ergo malum, et unde, et qua huc irrepsit ? Quae radix eius ? et quod semen eius ? An omnino non est ?

Augustine, *Confessiones*, vii. 5.

## VII

## THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

ANY attempt to deal with the problem of the existence of evil must necessarily involve the largest issues in religion and in philosophy. For there can be no real approach to the problem which does not raise questions as to the existence and the character of God, and as to the nature and purpose of the universe. But while the enigma of evil raises all these questions, it exists independently of them. As a moral and intellectual problem it is really quite unaffected by any diversity of religious or philosophical creed, as it is also quite untouched by modern knowledge. It is doubtless true that our conceptions of human sin have been modified by what we now know as to the history of the race, but the general problem of the existence of evil in the universe is totally uninfluenced by any such knowledge. Whatever we may know, whatever we may believe, as to the origin and purpose and history of the universe, the problem of evil remains precisely where it was. Even if, for the sake of argument, we accept for the moment the position of a discredited materialism, and regard the human mind as a casual by-product of existence, we should be left with the problem in the form of the incredible paradox that the human mind, though so insignificant an item in the universe, nevertheless finds fault with the universe,

and discovers it to be defective. This mere epiphenomenon of consciousness, this haphazard effervescence on the surface of boundless existence, is able to comprehend and to condemn the whole of things as somehow imperfect and perverse. The very existence of any knowledge of the universe whatever does in fact involve the knowledge of it as less perfect than it ought to be. And so, on any theory of existence, even though it be the crassest materialism, the enigma abides. Why is it that in the very act of knowing existence at all we know it as something less and something worse than we know it ought to be?

That is the ultimate problem, and for any one who has the philosophic mind and seeks to be, in Plato's phrase, 'a spectator of all time and all existence,' it cannot be escaped. It does not really help to divide the problem into compartments. To distinguish between natural, metaphysical, and moral evil is useful enough for ordinary purposes, but it cannot represent a real diversity of ultimate nature and ultimate origin. It is true, for example, that the sufferings of animals and the sins of men are different things, but it is also true that (if there is any explanation of anything at all) there must be one explanation which covers both series of facts. For when you regard existence as a whole the problem is: Why is there anything wrong anywhere at all? If the universe is a universe—one whole system of existence—the final problem is not: Why is there this and that particular defect, here and there? but: Why is there some fundamental defect in the very structure of the universe, something essentially wrong in the very

texture of things, which reveals itself in different places and in different ways, but always as something defective, something wrong, something evil? The problem of evil in all its forms becomes finally in fact the problem of moral evil, because the ultimate question is as to why there is anything at all in nature or in man that contradicts our sense of what is right and just and kind—why there is anything anywhere which outrages our moral standards.

Now the existence of a problem like this, which is a single problem, an ultimate problem, and a moral problem, suggests that there must be (if the universe is a rational universe) some one answer, some final answer, and some moral answer to it. As the scientist and the mathematician are led on by a diversity of material phenomena to general conclusions (and sometimes highly theoretical and abstruse conclusions, such as that about the curvature of space) as to the nature of the physical universe, so the philosopher and the theologian are led on by a diversity of moral phenomena to general conclusions as to the nature of the moral universe, and very often to the theory of some original torsion in the spiritual world. There must be an explanation of all the crooked things which exist in experience, and the explanation must surely lie in some primitive strain of crookedness in the universe.

The problem of evil seems to exist in its most acute form for the theist, because obviously the fact of the evil in the universe is very difficult to reconcile with a belief in God as absolute goodness. But it ought to be remembered that theism only throws the problem into

prominence by making the difficulty appear more vivid: it does not create the problem. The enigma of evil exists for every one alike. It is as real a problem for the atheist and the agnostic as for the Christian. If it seems to be less pressing in the case of the unbeliever that is only because his unbelief means that he has thrown up the whole problem of the universe in despair. He says frankly that he cannot himself offer, or he says dogmatically that it is not possible for any one to offer, a rationale of the universe. He gets rid of the awkward factor in the problem only in this sense, that he gives up the whole problem as insoluble. But if he should set himself to any interpretation of the problem of existence at all, he would encounter the enigma of evil as definitely as any one else. The problem of evil, that is to say, is more acute for the theist only in the sense that, as a theist, he is compelled to face it because he is committed to a real interpretation of the universe, and in any such interpretation it cannot be ignored. But for any one who is not a theist the problem exists in the same way if he ventures upon any theory of the universe whatsoever, or if (what is very much the same thing) he regards the universe as in any sense an intelligent, purposive, and responsible scheme of things. If it is that, the question instantly arises as to why there is what appears to be an irrational, irresponsible, contradictory element in the scheme.

There is therefore no real escape from the problem, whatever our belief or our unbelief may be, and it is natural that there should have been very many attempts at a solution of it. One ancient theory,

which has had a popular revival in our days, is an attempt at the solution of the problem by way of a sort of denial that the problem exists. It is that evil is not positive but negative; that in the very nature of it, if it can be said to have a nature, it is unreality. The theory may be stated thus in the most general terms, but in point of fact it has been held in two or three slightly different forms. In the East, for example, it has been held in such an uncompromising fashion that evil is reduced to sheer illusion. Evil simply does not exist at all, except as a phantasm of the mind. It may be remarked that this does not really resolve the issue, for even if evil is absolute illusion the obstinate question remains as to why the human mind should be so perversely constituted as to create this illusion so constantly and so universally. It would seem that there must be something wrong in the very nature of a universe which produces an instrument so consistently misleading, and so we are back at the original issue again.

Another attempt to answer the problem really amounts to a special form of the last theory. It could hardly be better expressed than in St. Augustine's metaphor of the black shadow in the picture, ugly in itself, but helping to make up the beauty of the whole.[1] This means that the evil in the world appears as evil when seen in the part, but is not really evil when seen in the whole. The evil character is a kind of optical illusion; it is only when the thing is seen in a fragmentary and therefore false way that it seems to be evil; on the largest scale of all, on which alone

[1] *De civ. Dei*, xi. 23. *Conf.* vii. 19.

things can be truly seen, it is not evil, but good. This was a view which naturally commended itself to the rather shallow optimism of the eighteenth century. It is the doctrine of Pope :

> All nature is but art, unknown to thee ;
> All chance, direction which thou can'st not see ;
> All discord, harmony not understood ;
> All partial evil, universal good ;
> And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
> One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.

Somewhat akin to this view of evil as partial good is the theory of some philosophers that evil inheres in the finite.[1] It is like the last view in that it makes evil belong to the fragmentary, and disappear in the whole, but it is different in that it does not make the evil result from a limited and partial perception of what is, but from the limited and partial nature of what is. In other words, evil is the concomitant of finite existence rather than of the finite mind. The infinite cannot become the finite without becoming imperfect ; the very limitation involved in finite existence is a distortion and a mutilation.

This particular theory has a long history. It appears at least as early as Philo, and it bulks largely in Eckhart and in Nicholas of Cusa.[2] In these thinkers it amounts to this—that while the love of God is infinite, and He is therefore infinitely willing to impart His goodness to all things, the finite world cannot

[1] Cf. Dorner, *Christian Doctrine*, ii, p. 363.

[2] Watson, *The Philosophical Basis of Religion*, p. 212. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, pp. 150, 230, 269, 272–3, 419. Nicholas of Cusa, *De docta ignorantia*, ii. 2, p. 24. *De fil. Dei*, p. 122.

receive all that God is willing to give. It has only, as finite, a finite receptivity, and hence the world is not a perfect expression of the goodness of God. It is perhaps significant that Philo holds formless matter to be uncreated and eternal. All this line of thought really resolves itself into dualism, for it means that beside God there is another factor in creation—something intractable and perverse in the very nature of matter or of the finite, which is not derived from God, and which He cannot overcome.

St. Augustine's essential doctrine was not unlike this. He held that God alone can be said to exist in the absolute sense: He alone is unoriginated, self-existent, self-sufficient, perfect; therefore He alone *is*, in the full sense of the word. All created things, as less than God, have an element of imperfection in them, an element of negation, inasmuch as their imperfect existence is to that extent a negation of the perfect existence of God. All evil therefore results in a sense from the inability of the finite to receive more than an imperfect impartation of the infinite.

Another theory, frequently found in the ancient world, discovers the secret of evil in matter. Spirit is the highest kind of existence, and is therefore good: matter is the lowest kind of existence, and therefore, as at the farthest remove from spirit, it is evil. For what is spiritual to be expressed in a material creation, or to dwell in a material body, is necessarily a degradation, a defilement. This again, is a special form of the preceding theory. As the infinite is degraded by being reduced to the finite, the spiritual is degraded by

being reduced to the material. In each case the thought is that there is a necessary declension from goodness as you descend in the scale of being. To come down from the limitless to the limited, from the eternal to the temporal, from the universal to the particular, from the spiritual to the material, is a necessary departure from the perfect and the good, and a necessary approach to the imperfect and the evil.

Another consideration which is often urged is that good and evil are correlatives—that the one implies the other and is meaningless without the other. Now this is doubtless so, within ordinary limits. For all practical purposes it is true that good and evil, like light and darkness, each involve the existence of the other. But this cannot be true on the largest scale of all. After all, light is the positive thing, and darkness, as the absence of it, is only a negative thing. If light had never existed, the absence of it would never have been known as darkness; indeed, would never have been known as anything and would never have been anything. It is only the positive existence of light that creates a negation of itself, and gives a sort of existence (to speak paradoxically) to that non-existence of it that we call darkness. And so with good and evil. Evil could never have existed but for the existence of good. Good is the prior thing, the positive thing. It is not possible to conceive the existence of nothing but evil, it is possible to conceive the existence of nothing but good. The theist believes that if he thinks of God apart from the universe, at the beginning of things, he must think of an Absolute

Goodness existing alone. So that good and evil are not purely and necessarily correlative, though it is true that when evil has come into existence it is seen and interpreted as the obverse of good.

It ought to be remembered, too, that the correlation of good and evil is not in any sense an explanation of the problem of evil. At the most it only amounts to this, that in this universe, as we know it, good and evil are counterparts, but that does not in the least explain why the universe is constituted in such a fashion that they should be.

But it would certainly seem to be true that we cannot conceive of any moral universe which does not present good and evil as alternatives. In any such scheme of things as the present universe, at any rate, it would be impossible to have moral beings unless they had the exercise of moral choice. If God had made men so that they could not help but do His will they would not have been men, and they would not have been moral creatures at all; they would have been a-moral automata. But this again, while true, is not really an answer to the problem of evil. It only says that in any such universe as we know, the moral alternative seems necessary; it does not answer the question why the universe should be such as it is, and why such a necessity should exist. The problem, in fact, keeps recurring in this way. It is possible to find some sort of explanation of the necessity of evil in such a universe as this, but there is no answer to the question as to why the universe should be such as it is, except the inscrutable will of the Almighty. In Bishop Butler's phrase, things are as

they are, and there is no ultimate explanation available for us as to why they should be as they are. That lies hid in the eternal counsels of God.

So that religion, unlike some of the more superficial philosophies, does not profess to give a complete explanation of the problem of evil. The very nature of religion itself would exclude any such pretence. For the essence of religion is faith, and faith implies a doubt, a mystery, a vast and vital question unanswered as yet, except that we dare to answer it for ourselves by a spiritual affirmation of what we believe to be final truth—'an affirmation and an act That bids eternal truth be present fact.' There would be no place for faith if we had a complete explanation of the universe ready to hand. The essence of faith is to believe in the good despite the evil, to believe in God despite so much in the world that looks as if God did not exist. Faith is not a facile assent to dogma, but a resolute attitude of the soul that faces all the facts, and in spite of all that looks like the worst, dares to believe the best: faith is the spirit that cries, Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him! That is the essential spirit of religion, and it is plain that it could not exist, and would not need to exist, in some crystal sphere where there was no mystery at all, and where the soul would know as it is also known. It is only God who knows all, and for us to know all, so that the mystery of evil would disappear for us, would mean that we were already raised to the height of heaven, and were already beholding all things with the universal vision of the Most High.

But while no complete solution of the problem of

evil is attainable it is surely possible to feel certain that some of the thoughts of men about it do at least point in the direction of the truth. Thus the view that evil is partial good has at least a suggestion of truth in it for every one who believes in God. For our faith in God as essential goodness necessarily involves a belief that in some way beyond our understanding He will make what is evil subserve His great purposes, so that evil will be finally resolved in a universality of good. But there is a difference here, and a vital one. It is one thing to say that the evil is not really evil at all, but a myopic illusion of the mind of man, and it is another thing to say that the evil is evil, and the most dreadful of all present realities, but that, notwithstanding, it will be transmuted into good, in the mysterious alchemy of the divine purposes, in some way utterly inconceivable to us at present. The aspect of truth presented by the view of evil as partial good is this—if we believe in God we must believe that in His purpose evil is allowed to exist as a part of an entire scheme of things which, as an entire scheme, is good.

The doctrine of the unreality of evil, again, must convey a hint of ultimate truth. It is a significant fact, in this connexion, that evil does undoubtedly possess a parasitic character. As St. Augustine pointed out long ago, the evil cannot exist without good, but the good can exist without evil.[1] There must be that which may be corrupted before you can have corruption, and plainly it must be something

[1] *Enchiridion*, xiv. Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* (Suppl.), qu. 69, art. 7, ad. 9.

which is existent and something which is good; what is not cannot be corrupted, and what is not good cannot be corrupted. Evil presupposes an existent good as the substratum in which it may arise and in which it may develop. This seems to be confirmed by a consideration of the characteristics of good and evil. Good is essentially creative; evil is essentially destructive. What is good is like a principle of health and life; what is evil is like a principle of disease and death. It is possible to conceive of goodness as creating a universe; it is not possible to conceive of evil as doing anything except disintegrating and destroying what exists.

We may accept the doctrine of the negative character of evil without denying its present reality, and making it into pure illusion. In this more moderate sense it is, as a matter of fact, the traditional doctrine of the Christian Church. It is found alike in the theologians of the Eastern and of the Western Church: St. John Damascene said that evil is nothing else but the absence of the good, and St. Thomas Aquinas, in almost the same words, said that evil is the defect of the good that ought to exist. In other times Origen and Augustine and Anselm had said exactly the same thing.[1] Now on any theistic theory of the universe something of this kind must be true. If we believe in God or in the supremacy of goodness in any sense, we must believe that evil does not possess the same

[1] St. John of Damascus, *De fide orth.*, ii. 30. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, pt. i, qu. 49, art. 1. Origen, *De princ.*, ii. 9. *Comm. in Ev. Joh.*, ii. 13, 7. St. Augustine, *Conf.*, vii. 12. *Enchir.*, xi. *De civ. Dei*, xi. 9, &c. St. Anselm, *De conceptu virg.*, v.

kind of primary, necessary, and eternal reality as goodness. The good is what ought to be: it has a necessary character. It derives directly from God—that is directly from eternal and absolute reality. But the evil ought not to be; it is in the nature of a contradiction of the fundamental purpose of existence, and the fundamental nature of reality. It cannot be real in the sense in which God is real, or in the sense in which goodness is real. It exists here and now, but it does not exist apart from the creation. If looking backward and looking forward, we seek to think of an eternal state in which God was before all worlds, or in which the divine purposes in the life of the worlds have at last been fulfilled and God is all in all, we should be compelled to think of that state as without evil. If God exists, it must be true that once evil did not exist, and that once again it will not exist. Evil has therefore only a temporary, inconsistent, invasive character in the world of reality.

While finite minds cannot hope to reach a final solution of the problem of evil, we believe that it is possible, along these lines, to see in what direction we ought to look for it. There are some fixed points that are sufficient to give us our bearings. One is that evil cannot originate from God. It is vital to any theistic belief that God is good, or rather, as St. Augustine said, that He is goodness itself, *non hoc et illud bonum, sed ipsum Bonum*,[1] and evil cannot originate from goodness. It would be to deny the essential character of goodness and of God to say that evil derives its existence from Him or that He wills

[1] *De Trin.*, viii. 3, 4.

it in any absolute sense. For when we speak of evil in relation to the will of God it is necessary to distinguish carefully the sense in which we use the word. In the full sense of the word God cannot will evil; in another sense it may be said that as a matter of experience He does actually will it. That is to say, it is impossible to think of God as willing the evil in the sense in which He wills the good. He cannot be the source of evil; it is the utter contradiction of His will and His nature. The good is what God wills; the evil is the absolute denial of what God wills. And yet evil is here in the universe—in the scheme of things which owes its origin and its continuance to the will of God. We are driven to say that the will of God allows to exist, for a time, as a part of the universal system of existence, what is really a contradiction of His essential will. He permits, in His inscrutable purpose, what He does not will, in the proper sense of the word.

Another fixed point is that evil cannot be ultimate—that it cannot belong to the deepest stratum of reality. If God exists He is the *Ens realissimum*, the ultimate reality, and evil cannot derive from Him. It must therefore possess only a minor reality. It cannot possess the same kind of absolute and permanent reality which belongs to the being of God. The temporal universe, as derived from God and dependent upon Him, can only possess a secondary kind of reality, in contrast with the eternal and unoriginated reality of God. But the reality of evil must be, in some sense, less than this. For it can only possess a temporal reality and it cannot be derived from God

or dependent upon Him. It is, therefore, unlike what is good in the universe, not at the second but at the third remove from absolute reality.

Another fixed point is that evil must ultimately possess a voluntary character. We may speak loosely of an evil principle as if it were an abstract thing, but an evil principle cannot be anything but some tendency which derives in the last resort from an evil will. There is wrong and woe in the world that is not immediately the result of any volition, but any one who believes the universe to be a moral and spiritual universe must believe that all that is wrong with the universe must, in the last resort, be morally and spiritually wrong with it. Now it would seem to be quite meaningless to speak of good and evil as moral and spiritual qualities except in reference to a personal will. There is a famous passage in Kant in which he declares that 'nothing in the whole world, or even outside of the world, can possibly be regarded as good without limitation except a good will.'[1] It would seem quite impossible to escape that conclusion. Nothing possesses a moral quality apart from will. There are many things in the world that possess no moral character in themselves, but they acquire one as they are used for good or for evil. But that very use implies direction by a personal will. It seems to be strictly impossible to think of anything as good or as evil unless it is either a volition or the instrument or the result of a volition. It hardly needs to be

[1] *Foundation of the Metaphysic of Morals*, p. 9. The notion that evil is seated in the will seems to appear clearly first of all in Iamblichus, and is prominent in St. Augustine.

said that to speak of a will is precisely equivalent to speaking of a personality.

Now if evil derives from a will, a personality, and if it is unthinkable that it should derive from God, the only possible conclusion is that it derives from some personality that has been called into existence by God—that it has its source in the rebellion of some created will against the Most High. This is certainly in accord with what we know of evil in our human experience. For it is undoubtedly true to say that in man the root of sin is self. Every thought and word and deed that is evil amounts to an assertion of self against others or of self against God. It would seem that this must be true also of any other moral creatures that may exist in the universe. This consideration may perhaps lead us near the heart of the problem. For any moral being must be a self: there must be a centre of consciousness and of will if there is to be any such thing as the moral choice that makes a moral being. Only a self can choose the good for itself and reject the evil for itself. There is a profound truth in Schelling's saying that God can only give Himself to His creatures as He gives a self to them.

Now suppose that in the beginning of things such a self moved out of its proper orbit, the centre of which was God, and developed an independent motion which carried it away from God and made it revolve upon itself—this would represent the beginning of evil in the creation. To change the metaphor, we know that when all the cells which compose a living body act in subordination to the vital purpose all is well, but if one of these cells begins to live its own life, and

develop on its own lines, there is the beginning of a malignant disease. So when some centre of consciousness and will and personality began to live its own selfish life in severance from God and His eternal purpose, evil must have had its origin.

Now this is substantially the traditional doctrine of the Christian Church. It is easy to scoff at it as mere mythology. Doubtless it is that, in a sense. But even mythology does not come into existence uncaused. It is only the imaginative expression of instincts and intuitions which lie deep in humanity. The belief in Satan and the fallen angels is the expression of what has been deeply felt in the heart of man through the ages—that evil cannot come from God, that it is not an eternal element in the universe, and that it must have a prehuman and premundane origin in the revolt of some spiritual self against God.

That, which is in essence the traditional belief of the Christian Church, is the only real rationale of the origin of evil which exists. We do not say that it solves the darkest problem of existence, but we do say that at least it seems to indicate the only direction in which the solution can possibly lie.

# VIII
# THE ESSENCE OF MYSTICISM

Tout chrétien en état de grâce aime Dieu et, dans une mesure plus ou moins grande, est un mystique.

Henri Joly, *Psychologie des Saints*, p. 43.

## VIII

## THE ESSENCE OF MYSTICISM

WHAT is mysticism, considered as a system of thought ? The very name is dubious and unfortunate. A mystic (*μύστης*) was one who had been initiated into the deeper secrets of pagan religion, in the mysteries of Demeter, or Bacchus, or Mithras, and was under a solemn obligation to be silent (*μύειν*) about these hidden things. There is therefore about the word a primary connotation (which has never been altogether lost) of what is secret and incommunicable. Here we encounter an ambiguity in the modern use of the word, for mysticism may mean the practice or the doctrine. And while the suggestion of the unspeakable is doubtless true enough of what are sometimes called mystical experiences (which really mean all the profounder experiences of the soul) it does not apply particularly otherwise, for there is nothing especially esoteric about the doctrine of mysticism. Mysticism, as an intellectual system, is no more secret and no more mysterious than any other system of philosophy or theology. Wherever the *differentia* of mysticism is to be found it is certainly not in any character of secrecy or mystery. Etymology scarcely helps us here.

There is a difficulty also in the fact that there is no equation between the terms ' mystics ' and ' mysticism.' By ' the mystics ' we mean a definite series of

religious writers, ranging within Christendom at least from the pseudo-Dionysius to William Law. But by ' mysticism ' as a habit of thought we mean a particular way of regarding religion which is by no means confined to the mystical writers. Upon any rational definition of it there is mysticism in the New Testament, in the words of our Lord and of St. Paul and St. John ; there is mysticism in the Fathers, in St. Augustine most of all ; there is mysticism in Luther and in Wesley, who both said hard things about mystical writers. Whatever the essence of mysticism may be it is certainly found in many writers besides those who are technically called mystics.

Then, again, it is quite certain that many judgements as to mysticism, and therefore many attempts to define what it is, have been prejudiced by the fact that paradox is the native dialect of mysticism. It has led many critics to think that mysticism means intellectual extravaganza, and that mystics are writers who mask vagueness of thought with perversity of language. Surely the fact is rather that any doctrine of the infinite is beset by the contradictions that inhere in finite thought and finite language. As Cousin said : *La philosophie n'est pas philosophie si elle ne touche à l'abîme ; mais elle cesse d'être philosophie si elle y tombe.* Any doctrine that deals with the ultimate problems concerning the relation of God to the universe, of the spiritual to the natural, of the eternal to the temporal, must tremble on the verge of utter contradiction, but so long as the verge is not passed, it has not forfeited its intellectual rights. This is the real explanation (and the real justification to some extent) of the *via*

*negativa*. For as Athanasius wrote: 'Although it be impossible to comprehend what God is, yet it is possible to say what He is not.'[1] And the whole intent of the *θεολογία ἀποφατική* is to suggest what God is, by defining what He is not. Every definite statement is in the nature of it a limitation, and God is unlimited. It is only possible to suggest His limitlessness by denying every conceivable limitation. 'When I have said that God is not being, and is more than being,' Eckhart writes, 'I have not thereby denied Him being, but I have dignified and exalted it in Him.'[2] Thus while every religious man is concerned most of all to affirm that God is, and that He is good, many of the mystic paradoxes appear on the surface to deny both the goodness of God and His very existence. But the purpose of those paradoxes is to affirm an unspeakable goodness and an unspeakable existence. God is not good, say the mystics, for His goodness is not a quality to be expressed in an adjective; rather He is the source of goodness, the sum of goodness, goodness itself, absolutely.[3] Nay more, He is not goodness at all, since goodness stands opposed to evil, and is only one side of an opposition; He is more-than-good, more-than-goodness, *ὑπεράγαθος*,

[1] *καὶ γάρ εἰ μὴ δυνατὸν καταλαβέσθαι τί ἐστι Θεὸς, ἀλλὰ δυνατὸν εἰπεῖν, τί οὐκ ἔστιν.* Athanasius, *Ep. ad Monachos*, i. 2 ( 693 A, ed. Migne).

[2] Daz ich aber gesprochen habe, got si niht ein wesen unde si über wesen, hie mit enhabe ich im niht wesen abe gesprochen, sunder ich habe ez in ime gewirdiget unde gehochet. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 269.

[3] *ὁ γὰρ κόσμος πλήρωμά ἐστι τῆς κακίας, ὁ δὲ Θεὸς τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ἢ τὸ ἀγαθὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ.* Hermes Trismegistus, *Poemandres*, vi. 4. Sic amandus est Deus, non hoc et illud bonum, sed ipsum Bonum. Augustine, *De Trin.*, viii. 3. Cf. Athanasius, *De Incarn. Verbi*, iii.

ὑπεραγαθότης.[1] And so God is not, God is nothing, say the mystics, for He is not as any other being is, and His existence is the contradiction of all other existence, for it is utterly beyond all else that exists. The super-existence of God entirely surpasses the reach of the human intellect, and is simply equivalent on the logical level to non-existence. *Deus* and *nihil* are equal conceptions to the understanding[2] because we cannot formally conceive the existence of either. As Eckhart expressly says: 'God is nothing: that means that God is as inconceivable as nothing.' Whether this sort of paradox is wise or not, there is no doubt as to the intention of it. It is precisely 'the inexhaustible positivity' of the conceptions, as Höffding has said, that 'breaks through every conceptual form, and turns every determination into an impossibility.' The paradox which characterizes the mystics is not therefore a perverse delight in intellectual somersaults; it is a serious attempt to utter, or at least to suggest, ultimate truths that are unutterable.[3]

Mysticism, then, as a system of thought, is not to be regarded merely as an exposition of those profounder experiences of the soul that are called mystical, nor as a type of teaching which is found alone in those who are called mystics, nor, least of all, as a vague, negative, and paradoxical way of thinking about the deepest truths of religion.

[1] τὸ ὑπεράγαθον, τὸ ὑπέρθεον, τὸ ὑπερούσιον, τὸ ὑπέρζωον, τὸ ὑπέρσοφον, καὶ ὅσα τῆς ὑπεροχικῆς ἔστιν ἀφαιρέσεως, Dionysius, *De div. nom.*, ii. 3 (640 B, ed. Migne). Cf. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 163.

[2] Got ist niht: da meinet daz got als unbegrifenlich ist alse niht. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 531.

[3] Cf. Otto, *Das Heilige*, p. 33.

Then what is mysticism? There have been many attempts to define it, all more or less inadequate, and some distinctly unfortunate. Most of these definitions have stressed one or other of these two characteristics —the inwardness of the spiritual life, or the immediacy of contact with God. Now it is true enough that these are always emphasized in the mystics, but it is scarcely satisfactory to regard them as the essentials of mysticism, for surely they are the essentials of all real religion. However much stress may be laid upon ecclesiastical institutions, and however much this stress may have obscured the inwardness and immediacy of religious experience, we should imagine that the most convinced institutionalist would confess in the last resort that, in its very essence, religion is an immediate and inward experience.

We would suggest that the most essential characteristic of mysticism is one which has not usually been stressed in the definitions, though it is suggested in Goethe's fine saying that mysticism is 'the scholastic of the heart.' Mysticism is a rationale of religious faith in the light of religious experience—a rationale, and one might almost say a rationalization. In other words it is the reasoned recognition of spiritual law and spiritual necessity in the domain of the soul. That recognition is often enough implicit and instinctive, but in everything that deserves to be called mysticism it is always present. Mysticism does not accept the facts of religion merely as arbitrary facts, unrelated except as belonging to the same revelation or the same experience. It insists that they are related throughout by a bond of spiritual necessity. It seeks to show

continuity and causality as between these spiritual facts. Since God, the world, and the soul of man are what they are, everything else follows. This does not mean that all is included within the religious consciousness. It is true that the mystic, because he emphasizes the inward and the spiritual, has often seemed to undervalue the outward and the historical, but the genuine mystic is not concerned to ignore the historical events of religion, or to regard them as superfluous. The facts of revelation and redemption must happen, but when they have happened the mystic sees them as standing in a necessary relation to each other, and to the nature alike of God and of man. They cannot be arbitrary events, and they cannot have arbitrary results. That is to say, they cannot be mere whims of the Creator, which produce magical effects in the soul of man. There must be an organic connexion both between all these spiritual facts as a system, and between all these facts and the experience of the redeemed soul. Does Christ die upon the Cross?—it is a fact of history which happened at a particular time, and a particular place, but it is more than that. The historic fact has an eternal aspect, and it has an experimental aspect. The historical fact is the realization in time of an eternal principle of sacrifice, and it has itself to be realized afresh in the life of the soul. The Cross is in the heart of God before it is raised on Calvary, and, once raised there, it must be raised afresh in the heart of the believer, and so of the whole range of redemptive events—

Though Christ our Lord a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
And not in thee, thy soul remains eternally forlorn.

The Cross on Calvary can never save thee from thy sin
Until it is upraised again thy very soul within.
Our Lord is risen from the dead! What help is that to thee
So long as thou remainest dead in sin and misery? [1]

So the mystic sees the organic connexion and continuity of spiritual facts. It is the mark of the philosophic mind that it looks for the necessary connexion of things, the underlying system beneath the particular facts, the ultimate relation of everything to the cosmic order. Now the mystic is in a profound sense the philosopher of religion. Mysticism within the sphere of Christianity is the result of a grafting of philosophy upon dogma, for it is largely a blending of Neoplatonism with Christian doctrine, and this is not an accident of history. The mystic, as a religious philosopher, believes that the universe of the soul is a spiritual system, every part of which depends upon every other, and he always looks for a continuous and causal relation between spiritual facts.

This, we believe, is the most essential characteristic of mysticism, and it can be amply illustrated from the great mystical writers. Thus, to begin at the beginning, creation is not regarded as a mere *fiat* of the Almighty, but rather as a necessary process resulting from the very nature of God. It is not a casual act which might never have been and need never have been, an

[1] Wird Christus tausendmahl zu Bethlehem geboren,
Und nicht in dir, du bleibst noch ewiglich verlohren.
Dass Kreutz zu Golgatha kan dich nicht von dem bösen,
Wo es nicht auch in dir wird auffgericht erlösen.
Ich sag, es hilfft dich nicht, dass Christus aufferstanden,
Wo du noch ligen bleibst in Sünd und todesbanden.
Scheffler, *Der cherubinische Wandersmann*, i. 61, 62, 63.

Almighty caprice, but rather a continuous and characteristic activity of God, due to His essential nature. God is ungrudging, *ἐκτὸς φθόνου*, in Plato's great phrase,[1] for He is Love, and love in its very nature is expansive and originative; it is essentially a giving away of one's self. The eternal goodness, therefore, is and must be creative, and the created universe issues from God by a kind of moral necessity. God must create, as the sun must shine; it is His very nature to give forth of His own being.[2]

It may be objected, of course, that this represents the universe as resulting from ultimate necessity, and not from the volition of God. But the answer of the mystic would be that the necessity is not an external compulsion, but a moral necessity within the Godhead, and that therefore there is no real contradiction between the two conceptions. Creation is both a necessary process and a free act—necessary, inasmuch as God, being what He is, must create; free, inasmuch as the will of God is under no external constraint. And the mystic would add that it is only in our own thought that there exists any real distinction between the nature

[1] Timaeus, 29: *ἀγαθὸς ἦν, ἀγαθῷ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος· τούτου δ' ἐκτὸς ὢν πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα γενέσθαι ἐβουλήθη παραπλήσια ἑαυτῷ.*

[2] Und ich spriche, daz sin gotheit hanget dar an, daz er sich gemeinen müeze allem dem, daz siner güete enpfenclich ist, unde gemeinete er sich niht, so enwere ez niht got. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 230. Got ist daz aller gemeineste. *Ibid.*, p. 269. Diu güeti ist niht gemachet noch geschaffen noch geboren: si ist gebernde unt gebirt den guoten. *Ibid.*, p. 419. Als ein ieglichu guotiu sache gemeinsamet sich allen den, die sin enpfenclich sint, dar umbe so were ez wider gotes güeti, daz er sich uns vorhielte, so wir sin enpfenclich weren. *Ibid.*, p. 479.

of God and the will of God. God is one, and His existence, His nature, His will, His goodness, and whatever else we may truly think of Him, are all inseparably one and the same in Him, in His eternal unity. Whatever may be thought of the way in which some of the mystics have expressed some of these thoughts, there can be no doubt that they rendered a great service to religious thought in insisting that the universe is not a sort of by-product of the activity of God, but that it is organically related to the very nature of the Deity.

And so with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity. To the mystic the Trinity is not merely a mysterious truth of revelation, to be accepted as setting forth an unspeakable fact in the nature of God : it is an eternal and necessary process in the life of God : it is the inherent and inevitable self-development of the Deity. The nature of God is not a barren unity, which is eternally static, but a fertile unity which has within it eternally a principle of differentiation. It is because God the Father eternally generates God the Son, and God the Spirit eternally proceeds from God the Father and God the Son, that God realizes Himself as personal love. How can eternal love be conceived, the mystic asks, except as that which eternally loves, that which eternally is loved, and that which is an eternal bond of love between these ? The Trinity therefore represents an efflux and a reflux of love within the nature of God, an eternal rhythm in the life of the Godhead.[1]

[1] Der este uzbruch unde daz erste uzsmelzen, daz got uz smilzet, da smilzet er in sinen sun unde da smilzet er wider in den vater. Ich sprach eines tages, daz diu porte daz were der heilig geist : d a

This rhythm is seen again by the mystics as repeated generally in the creation and especially in the soul of man. The substance of all things derives from the

smilzet er uz in güete in alle creaturen. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 117. In dem selben vluzze vliuzet der vater in den sun unde der sun vliuzet wider in den vater (dar uf sprichet unser herre Jesus Kristus 'der mich siht, der siht minen vater. Min vater ist in mir un ich in im') unde sie beide vliezent in den heiligen geist unde der heilige geist vliuzet wider in sie beide. *Ibid.*, p. 387. Cf. p. 274. Ubi Pater suum adspectat Filium, et in eo simul omnia, illic genitus est Filius. Et hic tamen non nisi unus idemque ; Filius est ex foecunda natura. Neque etiam ex hac generatione qua Pater suum gignit Filium, charitas, quae est Spiritus Sanctus, promanat. Sed ubi Filius est ex Patre genitus altera ab eodem persona, dum eum Pater inspicit genitum, et in eo, et cum eo, atque unum cum eo (in quo vita est creaturarum omnium) simul omnia intuetur : rursusque Filius Patrem generantem, et foecundum, et seipsum et omnia in eo adspectat : ex hac inquam, mutua in eadem foecunda natura intuitione amor procedit qui est Spiritus Sanctus, amborum (id est, Patris ac Filii) nexus. Et hic amor personas circumplectitur ac penetrat, rursusque intro manare facit in unitatem, ex qua Pater continenter et sine cessatione generat. Sed licet rursus intro refluxerint in unitatem, non tamen illc durare possunt ob naturae foecunditatem. Et hac generatio, istaque in unitatem refluxio, Sanctae Trinitatis operatio est : atque ita et personarum illic Trinitas, et naturae unitas est. Ruysbroeck, *De Regno Deum Amantium*, xxv, *Opera* (Cologne, 1552), p. 413.

Sublimis quidem et superessentialis divinae naturae unitas, in qua Pater et Filius in Sancti Spiritus unitate supra omnem virium nostrarum captum suam possident in nuda spiritus nostri essentia, ubi est altissimum silentium, creaturas omnes in lumine creato longe lateque excellit. Et haec excelsa unitas et vivida et foecunda est. Ex ipsa enim progignitu sine intermissione verbum aeternum a Patre, per eandemque generationem Pater cognoscit Filium et omnia in Filio ; itemque Filius cognoscit Patrem, et omnia in Patre, cum sint eiusdem ac simplicis naturae. Ex hoc autem Patris et Filii in aeterna claritate mutuo intuitu et contemplatione, aeterna quaedam emanat seu procedit complacentia ac amor infinitus, qui est Spiritus Sanctus. Ruysbroeck, *De ornatu spiritalium nuptiarum*, ii. 51, *Opera*, p. 347.

Father as the generative principle. The form of all things derives from the Son, as the generated principle, and the Image of God—*species in imagine*, as Hilary said.[1] The union between the substance and the form derives from the Spirit, as the principle of union. This is variously expressed by different mystical writers; sometimes as possibility, actuality, and necessity, for example, but always there is the fundamental thought of a principle of ultimate being, a principle of defined existence, and a principle of connexion, in which Father, Son, and Spirit are reflected. The Trinitarian formula is seen again in the spirit of man, in various triads such as essence, power, and energy,[2] or being, knowledge, and love,[3] or intellect, reason, and sense,[4] so that the very existence of the human spirit, and still more that spiritual life which is the knowledge of God, and in which the soul becomes all that it is meant to be, is a birth of the Triune God within man.[5]

Then, with regard to the problem of evil, the mystic is not content merely to recognize evil as a cosmic

[1] *De Trin.*, ii. 1.

[2] Dionysius, *Coel. Hier.*, xi. 2. οὐσία, δύναμις, ἐνέργεια. Wan ein ieglich werc vliuzet uz der kraft unde diu kraft vliuzet uz dem wesen. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 210. Cf. pp. 97, 124, 511.

[3] Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, xi. 26.

[4] Erigena, *De div. nat.*, ii. 23 (579 A).

[5] Dar umbe ist diu sele . . . gemachet . . . nach dem bilde der heiligen drivaltikeit. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 408. Der vater ist alwaltic in der sele, der sun alwise, der heilig geist alminnende in der sele. *Ibid.*, p. 511. Da enpfahet ein ieglichiu kraft der sele glicheit götlicher persone: der wille enpfahet glicheit des heiligen geistes, das verstentnisse enpfahet glicheit des sunes, daz gehügnisse glicheit des vaters unde götlicher nature unde belibet doch ungeteilt. *Ibid.*, p. 386. Cf. Böhme, *Aurora*, x. 58.

phenomenon. He seeks a metaphysical rationale of it. Unity, reality, and goodness are identified, on the ultimate scale. God, as the *ens realissimum*, is eternal unity and eternal goodness. Evil, therefore, as the absolute opposite of God, is temporal, divisive, and unreal. As anything approaches God it becomes not merely more good, but more united, and more real; as anything departs from God it becomes not merely more evil, but more divided and more unreal. Evil is divisive and destructive in its very nature; good is unifying and creative in its very nature. Evil is a departure from the eternal reality which is God, and evil is therefore privative, negative, unreal.[1] This does not mean that the mystic necessarily underrates the present actuality of evil. As a fact in the phenomenal world it is as real as any other fact, for present purposes. But if all reality and all goodness derive from God, and are one in Him, evil cannot be real in any ultimate sense.

And so with regard to evil in the life of the spirit. The mystic is not content merely to recognize evil as a moral phenomenon in the soul's life. He seeks a spiritual rationale of it, and he finds it in the fact that it is rooted in self, and that the first emergence of evil must therefore be the first revolt of personality against God, the first affirmation of a self, with a selfish will. Evil began when first the selfhood of a created spirit

[1] φύσις γὰρ τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ παράγειν καὶ σώζειν· τῷ δὲ κακῷ τὸ φθείρειν καὶ ἀπολύειν. Dionysius, *De div. nom.*, iv. 19 (746 C, ed. Migne). καὶ οὐκ ἔστι καθόλου τὸ κακὸν οὔτε ἀγαθὸν οὔτε ἀγαθοποιόν· ἀλλὰ τὸ μᾶλλον ἢ ἧττον τῷ ἀγαθῷ πλησιάζον ἀναλόγως ἔσται ἀγαθόν. *De div. nom.*, iv. 19 (747 D, ed. Migne). στέρησις ἄρα ἐστὶ τὸ κακὸν, καὶ ἔλλειψις, καὶ ἀσθένεια, καὶ ἀσυμμετρία, κ.τ.λ. *De div. nom.*, iv. 32 (752 D, ed. Migne).

was asserted against the Eternal Spirit [1]—the spirit of evil is, in Dante's words, 'he who first upon his Maker turned his back.' [2] That was the fall of Lucifer, and the first beginning of evil in the universe. 'When it is said that Lucifer fell from heaven, and turned away from God and the like,' writes the unknown author of the *Theologia Germanica*, 'that means nothing else, but that he would have his own will, and would not be at one with the Eternal Will.'

The story of the Fall of man is interpreted by the mystics along these lines. It was not the mere eating of the forbidden fruit that 'brought death into the world and all our woe.' The precise act was immaterial: what mattered was that it was an act of disobedience, and that behind the act there was a motive of spiritual revolt.[3] 'It is said, it was because Adam ate the apple

[1] Wan man spricht, der teufel lucifer viel von dem hymelreich und kerte sich von gote und des gleich, das ist nit anders, dan er wolt seinen eigen willen haben und nit einwillig sein mit dem ewigen willen. Und also was es auch umb Adam yn dem Paradeis. Und wan man eigen willen meynet, sso meynt man: anders wöllen dan der einfeltig ewig wille wil. *Theologia Deutsch* (ed. H. Mandel), xxxxvii, p. 90.

[2] *Paradiso*, ix. 127–8. Che pria volse le spalle al suo Fattore. Compare the following passage. Und got enmac unser als wenic enbern, als wir sin, wan were joch, daz wir uns von gote gekeren möchtin, so enmöhte sich doch got niemer von uns gekeren. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 60. Sundt sey nit anders, dan das sich die creatur abkert von dem unwandelhaftigen gut unnd kert sich zu dem wandelberen, dass ist: das sie sich keret von dem volkommen tzu dem geteilten und unvolkommen und allermeist zu yr selber. *Theologia Deutsch*, ii, p. 10.

[3] Und yn dissez paradis ist alles das erluabt, das darynne ist, on ein baum und sein frucht. Das meynt alsovil: in allem dem, das da ist, da ist nicht verpotten und nicht das got wider ist, dan eins allein; das ist eigen will oder daz man anders wölle dan der

that he was lost, or fell,' writes the author of the *Theologia Germanica* again, 'I say, it was because of his claiming something for his own, and because of his I, mine, me, and the like. Had he eaten seven apples, and yet not claimed anything for his own, he would not have fallen.' It was an assertion of the will of man against the perfect will of God : it was the created self rising up against the Creator ; an emergence of the *I*, the *me*, the *mine*, precisely parallel to that earlier emergence of the spirit of self, in the world of spirits, which was the revolt of Satan, and the absolute beginning of evil in the universe. 'Selfhood belongs to the Devil,' writes the same mystic, 'and therefore he is a devil.' [1]

So, again, the act of redemption is not viewed as if it were merely an arbitrary act of love, or as if it were a mere afterthought to counter the work of evil in the world, but as a spiritual development, so to speak, which flows naturally from the nature of God and the nature of man. God being what he is, must always seek to redeem, and to redeem in the only possible way, by imparting Himself. And man, being what he is, made in the likeness of God, but defaced and deformed by sin, can only be redeemed by being restored to union with God. It is only as man is

ewig wille wil. *Theologia Deutsch*, xxxxvii, p. 91. Mann spricht ; darumb, das Adam den Apffel ass, wer er verloren oder gefallen. Ich sprich : es was umb seyn annemen und umb seyn ich, meyn, mir, mich und umb des gleich. Hett er sieben apffel gessen und wer das annemen nit gewesen, er were nit gefallen. *Theologia Deutsch*, iii, p. 11.

[1] Icheyt und selbheyt das gehört alles dez teuffel zu, und desshalben ist er ein teuffel. *Theologia Deutsch*, xx, pp. 42–3.

brought back into likeness to God, and into union with God, that man is again what God purposed that he should be at the beginning. And it is only Christ, the second Adam, the perfect archetype of man, the Image of God and the sinless One, who can restore to man that likeness of God which the first Adam, the defaced archetype of man, lost to humanity by his sin. The redeeming work of Christ, in other words, is not conceived as magical, and producing arbitrary results, but as organic in its relation both to God and man.

It must be admitted that it is in the region of redemption that there is least proof of our thesis, but that is because it is precisely in this region that mysticism is most deficient. We would suggest that the reason for this is plain—it is that the whole doctrine of redemption was conceived in the West along juristic, almost along feudal lines. The genuine temper of mysticism could not fully appreciate a view of redemption that was so largely external. It might have been otherwise if the doctrinal forms had been moulded by the metaphysical genius of the East, instead of by the political genius of the West.

But there is no reason why the mystical principle should not be carried out as thoroughly in this region as elsewhere. Indeed, it would be well for modern religion if it were. Exactly as the mystic conceives the Eternal Love in relation to the universe, as essentially creative, we should regard it, in relation to the fact of evil, as essentially redemptive. And a redemptive love in contact with evil can only mean suffering and sacrifice—a share in the sufferings of men, and a

sacrifice for the sins of men. It can only be such an identification of God in Christ with man as means that God bears our sins, and that again means such an identification of the redeemed soul with God in Christ that we can say, in the profoundly mystical words of the Apostle, *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* The escape from sin and shame and guilt, in other words, must be ultimately an escape from self, and the only escape from self is when we are able to say, *I, yet not I.* 'A friend is another "I,"' Eckhart writes, 'God is therefore become another "I," that I may become another "He."'[1]

Then, again, in the region of eschatology, the mystic does not think of heaven and hell as places where men are rewarded or punished by the mere decree of God, however righteous that decree may be, but rather as states of soul which follow inevitably from a life of holiness or a life of sin.[2] Men have heaven and hell within themselves, as the mystics say, before ever they discover themselves in everlasting bliss or everlasting woe. And so heaven would be hell to a sinner, if he found himself there, and hell would be heaven to a saint, for he would have God with him and in him.

This is the real meaning of the mystical paradox of *amour désintéressé* which bulked so largely in the

[1] Ein freunt ist ein ander ich, spricht ein heiden. Got der ist dor um worden ein ander ich, uf daz ich würd ein ander er. Jostes, *Meister Eckhart und seine Jünger*, No. 82, p. 97.

[2] Ich sage iu wol, waz diu helle ist. Ez ist anders niht denne ein wesen. Waz hie iuwer wesen ist, daz sol eweclich iuwer wesen sin. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 455.

controversy between Fénelon and Bossuet—that, as Fénelon says, the souls of the perfect would not love God the less if He were to send them to hell. It is an extreme and perhaps an unfortunate expression of the truth that the perfect life of God within the soul makes heaven, and the utter absence of that life makes hell, wherever a man may be. 'To be separated from God,' says Eckhart, 'that is the torment of hell.'[1] The soul deprived of God, destitute of God, carries its own hell within itself.[2] And the soul which possesses the perfect vision of God is in heaven, whatever its position in space may be. It is only the truth, strained to its paradoxical extremity, which is more simply expressed in Milton's famous lines—

> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.

Now all through this *conspectus* of mystical doctrine, the same characteristic may be noted. In every case there is the attempt to show spiritual necessity, spiritual continuity. There is the refusal to regard anything in the realm of the soul as merely arbitrary or isolated or casual. The action of inevitable laws

[1] Unde von gote gescheiden sin ist helschiu pine. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 310. Cf. *The Cloud of Unknowing*, pp. 265–8.

[2] Der mensche, der nu also stet in dem willen gotes, der wil niht anders dan daz got ist unde daz gotes wille ist. . . . Ja hienge helleschiu pine dar an, ez were ime ein fröide unde selikeit. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart*, p. 312. Cf. pp. 461, 516, 517. Omnino enim totus sum tuus, et si potest ad tuam esse laudem, tam libenter mergi velim in infernum, quam recipi in caelum. Fac mecum Domine secundum excellentissimae maiestatis tuae voluntatem. Ruysbroeck, *De ornatu spiritualium nuptiarum*, ii. 30, *Opera*, p. 335.

in the spiritual life is recognized throughout. God, man, and the universe being what we believe them to be, when once the facts of revelation and redemption are known, we see that these last follow inevitably from the very grounds of eternal being. In every case the mystic's language and emphasis, that is to say, do not merely offer a statement, but also suggest a rationale, of religious truth, showing that it is necessary, continuous, and organic, all the way through. And that, we believe, will be found to be the most essential characteristic of mysticism, and at the same time its most valuable contribution to religion.

# IX

# JOACHIM OF FLORA

il Calabrese abate Gioacchino,
di spirito profetico dotato.

Dante, *Paradiso*, xii. 140–1.

# IX

## JOACHIM OF FLORA

JOACHIM of Flora is one of the most fascinating figures to be encountered in the whole expanse of the Middle Ages.[1] In the centuries following his death he became an almost legendary personage, like Merlin and the Sibyl, with whom he was so often associated as a prophet. Under that character he has a large place in the strange history of the Fraticelli. In his own proper person he is specially remembered for a particular doctrine of religious development, which has a very attractive side, and which is strikingly recurrent in the history of the Church. He has also some singular points of contact with history and literature. A man who moved to mercy the merciless son of Barbarossa; who startled our own Richard Cœur-de-Lion by his prophetic words; who was admired by Dante, and honoured by some lines in the *Paradiso*; who had some remote influence upon Rienzi, the great Roman tribune; and around whose

[1] The principal authorities on Joachim are Rousellot, *Histoire de l'Évangile Éternel* (Paris, 1867), Gebhart, *L'Italie mystique* (Paris, 1890), Tocco, *Eresia nel Medio Evo* (Florence, 1884), Renan, *Nouvelles Études d'Histoire Religieuse* (Paris, 1884), Reuter, *Geschichte der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter* (Berlin, 1877), H. C. Lea, *History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages* (London, 1888), G. G. Coulton, *From St. Francis to Dante* (London, 1907), and, Grundmann, *Studien über Joachim von Floris* (Leipzig, 1927).

figure George Sand wrote one of her romances, *Spiridion*, cannot be said to be an uninteresting or unimportant person.

Joachim was born about 1130 at Celico, near Cosenza, in Calabria. It is said that his father was named Mauro and his mother Gemma. His father is reported to have been a notary who held some office at the court of Roger II of Sicily, and there Joachim was brought up. In early life he visited the Holy Land with (it is said) a large retinue of friends and companions. The plague was raging at Constantinople, and it seems that some of his comrades died of it. This appears to have occasioned the religious crisis of his life. He went on to Palestine as a pilgrim, with one companion, and passed the whole of Lent on Mount Tabor in prayer and fasting, dwelling the while in a dry cistern among the rocks. He believed that on the eve of Easter Day he received a revelation that determined his future thought and work. On his return to Italy he entered the Cistercian monastery of Sambucina, and seems to have remained there for some time as a layman, engaging nevertheless in evangelistic activities. The legend says that while he was at Sambucina he was walking one day in the garden of the monastery when an angel appeared, bearing a jar of wine, and bade him drink. Joachim drank, and, when he had quenched his thirst, returned the vessel. 'O Joachim!' said the angel, 'if thou hadst but drunk it to the last drop, no knowledge would have escaped thee!'

The ecclesiastical authorities objected to Joachim's preaching as a layman, and so he became a monk at

the Cistercian abbey of Corazzo. Later he was ordained priest, and about 1176 he became abbot of the monastery. We know that he visited Pope Lucius III at Veroli in 1184, and Pope Urban III at Verona in 1186. In these years Joachim appears to have had a considerable reputation as a saint and a seer. It is said that when Richard of England was at Messina in 1190, on his way to the Third Crusade, he sent for Joachim, and had a long conversation with him. The substance of it, according to the chroniclers who tell the story, was a lengthy exposition of the passage in Rev. xvii. 9, about the beast with the seven heads. These are Herod, Nero, Constantius, Melsemetus, Saladin, and Antichrist, who was shortly to appear. The king asked about the birth and reign of Antichrist, and Joachim replied that it was believed that Antichrist was already born in Rome, and would possess the Apostolic See. 'Then,' said Richard, 'I know who he is—he is Clement, who is now Pope!'

After he had been abbot of Corazzo for several years, Joachim was released from his duties by the Pope, in order that he might give himself to study and the completion of his writings. He was also given permission to live in whatever Cistercian house he chose. In 1183 he was at the abbey of Casamari as a guest, and remained there about a year and a half, writing and correcting his three books, the *Concordia*, the *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, and the *Psalterium decem chordarum*. Luke, a young monk of the abbey who acted as his secretary, says: 'I used to write day and night in copy-books, what he dictated and corrected on scraps of paper, with two

other monks whom he employed in the same work.' A letter of Pope Clement III, which is dated June 1188, refers to the two earlier works of Joachim, and urges him to continue writing. In addition to his desire for quietude there seems to have been dissatisfaction on Joachim's part with the laxity of the monastic life at Corazzo. Somewhat later he retired, with one companion, to Pietralata, a solitary region, and there afterwards he founded, with a few followers who had joined him, a new rule of his own, building the first house of the new Order on Mount Nero, in the mountainous district of La Sila. This became the famous abbey of Flora, significantly dedicated to St. John the Forerunner. The monastery was considerably befriended by the Emperor and his wife Constance. The latter is said to have made her confession to Joachim, at her own special request, and the story goes that he bade her rise from her chair of state and kneel on the ground, as became a penitent, reminding her that she was now in the place of Magdalene and he in the place of Christ. In these days the Norman kingdom of Sicily was being attacked by the Imperial armies, and Joachim is said to have saved some of the towns of Calabria, by his personal intercession, from Henry's brutal ferocity. The new Order received Papal approval in 1196, during the lifetime of Joachim, in a Bull of Celestine III. It was approved again in a Bull of Innocent III on January 21, 1204. Joachim died in 1202, probably late in March, as a contemporary biographer says that it was ten days before Easter. The traditional date is March 30.

His secretary, Luke, speaks of Joachim's passionate

devotion: 'I served for him at Mass, astonished at the way in which he celebrated; he raised his arms higher than other priests do, blessing the Host with more emotion: he whose face was usually as livid as a dead leaf had a countenance as radiant as an angel's during the Holy Sacrifice. . . . When he preached before the Chapter he looked like an angel sitting above us all; he began in a low voice that soon resounded like thunder. . . . Many times I have surprised him on his knees, with hands and eyes raised to heaven, conversing joyously with Jesus, as if he saw Him face to face.' But all the early accounts of Joachim agree as to his real saintliness; he was manifestly a gentle, humble, kindly man, with an absolute devotion to Christ.

One formative influence in Joachim's teaching is probably the fact that he lived and travelled where he did. At home and abroad he had been in contact both with the Greek Church and with Islam. He had travelled in Greece, and at home in Calabria there were communities of Basilian monks who (though later in obedience to Rome) used the Greek rule and the Greek liturgy, and do so to this day. He had travelled in the Holy Land, and met with followers of Mohammed there—one story says that he gave almost his last garment to some destitute Saracens he met in the desert—and in Sicily, under the tolerant Norman kingdom of which he was a subject, there was a flourishing Islamic community. It is possible, as has been suggested, though it must be confessed that there is no actual evidence of it, that Averroistic tendencies reaching him through the Saracen culture

suggested vague dreams of a universal religion, a future age of spirituality in which all separating forms and all partial dogmas would disappear.[1]

The Order founded by Joachim never became a large institution. There appear to have been only thirty or forty houses, and those only in Italy, belonging to the *ordo Florensis*. They disappeared in the sixteenth century. In 1505 the abbey of Flora and its affiliated monasteries united with the Cistercians. Later in the century other Florian houses united with the Carthusians and the Dominicans, and by 1570 none remained of the original rule.

The sources for the biography of Joachim, as used in the *Acta Sanctorum*, are a life written by Luke, his secretary, afterward Archbishop of Cosenza ; another by a seventeenth-century monk of Flora, Jacobus Graecus Syllanäus, supposed to be based on an early life preserved in the abbey ; and another by Gregorius de Laude.

The authentic works of Joachim are the three books already mentioned. These are named in his testamentary letter, dated 1200, along with some *libelli* ; the latter being polemical tractates against Jews and adversaries of the faith.

Among the numerous works falsely attributed to Joachim are commentaries on Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, the *Vaticinia Pontificum*, and expositions of the prophecies of Cyril, Merlin, and the Erythraean Sibyl. Some of these have a quaint interest. The *Vaticinia Pontificum* sets forth in an emblematic fashion the line of Popes from Nicholas III onward.

[1] Windelband, *History of Philosophy*, p. 319.

Montaigne refers to it. 'I would to God I had with mine owne eyes seene those two wonders mentioned in the booke of Ioachin the Abbat of Calabria, who foretold all the Popes that should ensue, together with their names and shapes.' The *Oraculum Angelicum* was a book of prophecies said to have been communicated by an angel, in 1192, to Cyril, a Greek monk, who was the third General of the Carmelites, and to have been sent by Cyril to Joachim for his interpretation. The prophecies deal largely with the rivalry between the houses of Anjou and Aragon, and foretell the ruin of the Papacy. Rienzi was influenced by some of these prophecies during his last years in Rome.[1]

Joachim's apocalyptic speculations never brought him into trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities, notwithstanding his reflections on the Church. But he did get into difficulty over another matter. Peter Lombard had taught that it is not theologically correct to say that the Son is generated, or that the Spirit proceeds, from the Divine *essentia*, but that the Son is generated of the Father, and the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and that the Divine *essentia* belongs alike to the Three Persons in the Godhead. This looked to Joachim like a doctrine of

[1] After his flight from Rome in 1348, Rienzi lived for some time with hermits in the Abruzzi who belonged to the Fraticelli and who were steeped in the supposed prophecies of Joachim and Cyril. One of them, Fra Angelo, is said to have told him that the time had come to restore the Empire and purify the Church, as Joachim had foretold, and exhorted him to take his part in the great enterprise. These apocalyptic dreams had a great deal of influence on Rienzi from that time onward, and coloured his second term of rule in Rome, from August until October 1354.

quaternity, as if there are Three Persons in the Godhead and behind these, as it were, a fourth fact—an *essentia* of God which neither generates, nor is generated, nor proceeds. Joachim taught in opposition a doctrine which is perilously near Tritheism. He said that the Trinity was like the three sides of a psaltery, a gross illustration at the best, and one which would have lent itself easily enough to the very conception which he attributed to the Master of the Sentences. He quoted John xvii. 2, to prove that the union of the Persons was merely collective. Joachim's mind was evidently not acute enough for a dispute like this, for his own statements and illustrations are inconsistent. It is curious how extremes meet in a matter of this kind, for what Joachim was protesting against was a kind of guarded modalism which really went back to Augustine, while his own doctrine, with its enormous emphasis upon a successive manifestation of Father, Son, and Spirit in revelation and in the history of mankind is in this sense much nearer Sabellianism (despite what is said above) than anything the Lombard ever taught. Joachim's views were condemned at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. A few of his statements were reprobated, and Peter Lombard's doctrine was approved, but Joachim was never declared a heretic, and within a few years afterward Honorius III issued a Bull in which he was declared orthodox. This was in consequence of the efforts made to discredit him and his followers by the Cistercians, who had not forgotten or forgiven his desertion of their Order.

Apart from this excursion into Trinitarian con-

troversy, Joachim is theologically important for one thing and one thing only. The one essential principle which runs through Joachim's genuine writings is a doctrine of the three dispensations. There are three epochs in the revelation of God, the first being peculiarly the reign of the Father, the second that of the Son, and the third (and last and best) that of the Spirit. A general conception of this kind is perhaps inevitable in its broad outlines, but the special formulation of the idea and the special stress upon it goes back to the Montanists. Thus Tertullian speaks of righteousness, which begins as a natural fear of God, advancing, through the Law and the Prophets, to infancy; passing from that stage, through the Gospel, into the fervour of youth; and now, through the Paraclete, settling into maturity.[1] Elsewhere he speaks of a period of hardness of heart, represented by the Law and the Prophets; a period of weakness of the flesh, represented by the revelation in Christ; and a period of spirituality, represented by the Paraclete.[2] The same general thought of a progressive revelation of God in three stages is found in Gregory Nazianzen,[3] and doubtless in many other of the Fathers. It occurs in many mediaeval writers also; in Erigena,[4] for example, though in a rather special form, and notably in Hugh of St. Victor, who died about the time of Joachim's birth. In Hugh it is conceived as the day of fear, under the Law given by God the Father, when

[1] *De virg. vel.*, i.
[2] *De monogamia*, xiv.
[3] *Orat.*, xxxvii.
[4] *Comm. in Joann.*, 308 B–309 B.

power is supreme ; the day of truth, under the revelation of Christ, when wisdom is supreme ; and the day of love, under the administration of the Spirit, when love will rule all things.

Joachim develops this idea of the three dispensations with almost a lyrical passion. The first period is the age of law and fear, the second of grace and faith, the third of love. The first is the age of mere slavery, the second of filial service, the third of liberty. The first is a starry night, the second a grey dawn, the third the full day. The first is winter, the second spring, the third summer. The first is the rind, the second the stone, the third the kernel. The first bore nettles, the second roses, and the third shall bear lilies. The first is earth, the second water, the third fire. The first is Septuagesima, the second Lent, the third Easter.[1]

This sublime and suggestive conception of the three dispensations, the age of Father, the age of Son, and the age of Spirit, is Joachim's one dominant principle. But it emerges from a cloudy mass of allegory and apocalyptic which it is not easy to summarize. Everything in the Old Testament has a counterpart in the New Testament. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob answer to Zacharias, John the Baptist, and Christ ; the twelve Patriarchs prefigure the twelve Apostles, and so on. The chronology depends upon notes of time in the apocalyptic books of Scripture, such as the time, times, and half a time of Daniel, and the forty and two months and the thousand two hundred and threescore days of Revelation. These all signify a

[1] *Concordia*, v. 84.

period of 1260 years, which coincides beautifully with the forty-two generations (reckoned at thirty years each) between Abraham and Christ. Then, obviously, there must be a similar period between Christ and the beginning of the last era, the age of the Spirit.

The three ages overlap, in a sense. The first age is initiated in Adam, fructified from Abraham to Zacharias, and consummated in Christ. The second age is initiated in Uzziah, fructified from Zacharias to the forty-second generation following, and consummated in the year 1260. The third age is initiated in St. Benedict and fructified from the twenty-second generation following (i.e. from about the year 1200) to the end of the dispensation. The age of the Son thus begins to appear in the age of the Father, and reaches on into Joachim's own lifetime. The age of the Spirit begins to appear in the age of the Son, some centuries before Joachim's time, and reaches on to the end of the world. But the age of the Father ends with the advent of Christ, and the age of the Son ends with the final reign of the Spirit. During the first age men live a carnal life ; it is the age of the married. During the second age men live a mixed life between the flesh and the spirit ; it is the age of clerics. During the third age men will live a spiritual life ; it will be the age of monks.

The fate of Joachim, as an author, was singular. His genuine writings seem to have been almost forgotten for a time ; for a couple of generations after his death the Council of Arles could refer to them as ' untouched,' ' concealed,' ' neglected.' His fame, as far as books are concerned, resulted from the spurious writings

attributed to him, which undoubtedly emanated from the Franciscan Spirituals.

Soon after the death of St. Francis a serious cleavage appeared in the Order. The very genius of the Franciscan movement was poverty, and now the Order was acquiring property in convents and endowments. Two parties arose : one, more strict, desiring to adhere literally to the evangelical poverty of St. Francis and his first associates ; the other, less strict, holding that while the individual friar might own nothing, the Order might legitimately possess property, or at least enjoy the use of it, if it were theoretically regarded as vested in the Pope. At first this was merely a question of Franciscan discipline, but it speedily became more than that. For the more fanatical of the Spirituals proceeded to stress the virtue of poverty, in relation to the example of our Lord and His Apostles, in such a way that it became an immediate reflection upon the riches of the Church and especially the Papacy. This tendency was mingled with much that was mystical, and much that was apocalyptic, and it came to a head first of all during the rule of John Borelli (known as John of Parma, from his birthplace), who was elected General in 1247, and deposed in 1257.

The great vogue of Joachim in these days was due to the belief that he was the author of a mysterious book, much venerated among the Fraticelli, and called *The Eternal Gospel.* As a matter of fact, such a book never really existed. The name derives from Rev. xiv. 6 : ' And I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having an eternal gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and

kindred and tongue and people.' The general notion of an eternal gospel accords with the characteristic doctrine of Joachim, for the conception of a last stage of revelation naturally carries with it the thought of a full, final, and abiding revelation through the spirit of God, an everlasting evangel. What was known as Joachim's book of *The Eternal Gospel* was really a reissue of one or more of Joachim's writings, prefaced by an *Introductorium in Evangelium aeternum*, written by Fra Gherardo of Borgo san Donnino, which appeared in 1254. It was long suspected to be by John of Parma.[1] Salimbene says that several of the latter's intimate friends were 'great Joachites.'

The book breathes the bitterest hostility to the Papacy, and is full of the apocalyptic dream which

[1] There is a long passage about the book in the *Roman de la Rose* (11994 sqq.). *Ces mauvais vers*, as Renan calls them, begin :

> En l'an d'incarnation
> Mille et deux cent, cent et cinquante
> N'est homs vivant qui m'en démente,
> Fu baillé, et c'est chose voire,
> Pour prendre commun exemploire
> Ung livre de par le grand diable
> Dit l'Evangile pardurable.

Or, in the English version :

> The year of the incarnacioun
> A thousand and two hundred yeer,
> Fyve and fifty, ferther ne nere,
> Broughten a book, with sorry grace,
> To yeven ensample in comune place,
> That seide thus, though it were fable—
> *This is the gospel perdurable,*
> *That fro the Holy Ghost is sent,*
> Wel were it worth to bene brent.

really does derive from Joachim, though it is elaborated in some directions. The end of the present dispensation is expected in 1260 ; in the Age of the Spirit the New Testament will be superseded, the sacerdotal system of the Church will vanish, and the proud clergy and lazy monks will be succeeded by saintly religious who go barefoot.

The particular circumstances which brought the book into such great prominence make an interesting chapter of mediaeval history. In the thirty odd years which had elapsed since their foundation the Mendicant Orders had made enormous progress. There were friars in great numbers all over Europe, and they had become very serious rivals of the secular clergy. Many efforts had been made by the bishops and the secular clergy to restrict their privileges, but the Papacy steadily favoured them. Then an incident at the University of Paris led to a serious and momentarily successful attempt against them. A student was killed and several were wounded by the watch of Paris in a street brawl. Failing to get redress, and always jealous of its privileges, the University closed its doors in protest. Two Dominican teachers went on with their lectures, and when the University ordered them to be silent, appealed to the Pope. When the University reopened, they were required to take an oath to observe the statutes, which they refused to do, except on conditions, whereupon they were expelled. The Dominican and Franciscan provincials at Paris took up the case, and appealed to Rome. Innocent demanded the repeal of the rule by the University. The famous theologian, William of St. Amour, went to

Rome to interview the Pope, who immediately changed front in the most surprising way. It is said that some action of the Dominicans in Rome had piqued the Pope at that very time. However that may be, he spread dismay through the Mendicant Orders by the Bull of November 21, 1254, *Etsi animarum*, which provided that worshippers from other parishes were not to be allowed in their churches on Sundays and feast days, that they were not to be permitted to hear confessions without licence from the parish priest, and that they were not to preach in their own churches before Mass, nor, apparently, in parish churches at all. It was a colossal victory for the University of Paris and for the secular clergy. But it was short-lived, for Innocent IV died on December 7, having survived the publication of the Bull little more than a fortnight. It was widely believed that his death was the work of the Dominicans. Anyhow, it saved the Mendicants. A new Pope, Alexander IV, was elected with unusual rapidity; and within ten days after his accession he issued an encyclical revoking the offending Bull of Innocent. A few months later, on April 14, 1255, the Bull *Quasi lignum vitae* decided the quarrel with the University in favour of the Dominicans. William of St. Amour returned to Paris determined to carry on the struggle, and he had already found a weapon ready to hand in the *Introduction to the Eternal Gospel*, which had only recently appeared. He wrote a tractate, *De periculis novissimorum temporum*, in which he attacked the book, and the Mendicants generally. 'For the past fifty-five years,' he wrote, 'some have been striving to substitute for the gospel

of Christ another gospel, which is said to be a more perfect one, and which they call the gospel of the Holy Spirit, or the Eternal Gospel.'[1] He goes on to refer to the prophesied end of the sacramental and hierarchical system, and to the millennial expectations which fixed upon the year 1260. His attack upon the Mendicants was regarded as so serious that he was answered from the Franciscan side by St. Bonaventura and from the Dominican side by St. Thomas Aquinas. The controversy led to the appointment of a commission of three Cardinals, who met at Anagni, and in July 1255 censured *The Everlasting Gospel*, but with some reserve. The book of William of St. Amour was roundly condemned, as scandalous and execrable, in a Bull of October 5, 1256, *Romanus Pontifex.*[2]

The apocalyptic expectations of the Joachites began to be discredited when the fateful year of 1260 passed without any amazing event. Salimbene is probably typical of many in this matter. The mania of the Flagellants in that year had stimulated his hopes, but he says: 'After the death of the ex-Emperor Frederick, and the passing of the year 1260, then I let that whole doctrine go; and I am purposed to believe no more than I can see.' There are echoes of Joachite belief, however, for more than a century after this. It was revived in a modified way by Peter John Olivi, a later

[1] *De periculis novissimorum temporum*, p. 38.

[2] The Anagni document quotes passages from all three of Joachim's genuine works, but they are not exact. Probably they are passages quoted as glossed or explained by some one. It also gives Gherardo as the author of the Introduction. (Denifle, *Das evangelium aeternum und die Commission zu Anagni*, in *Archiv für Litteratur- und Kirchen-geschichte*, i .pp. 99–100 (Berlin, 1885).)

leader of the Spirituals, who died in 1297, and by his follower, Ubertino da Casale,[1] who left the Order in 1317. It appears in Gerard Segarelli and the sect of the Apostolic Brethren; and in the fanaticism of Dolcino and his followers, which ended in a ghastly scene of blood and fire on Monte Zebello in 1307. It reappears in the prophecies of Telesphorus of Cosenza about 1386, being naturally reinforced by the disastrous conditions of the Papal schism. The persistence of millennial dreams based upon the apocryphal works of Joachim is probably the most enduring example of such follies in the history of Christendom.

It can scarcely be doubted, however, by any one who shares the Christian faith that the principal doctrine of Joachim himself, stripped of its apocalyptic fancies, is full of a profound insight into spiritual facts, and it is significant that it has recurred so often in the thought of the Church, and that it has so deeply impressed the minds of believers in so many communions. There is a spiritual evolution of humanity, and there are corresponding stages of revelation. For those who accept the teaching of the New Testament, and the witness of Christian experience, it does appear to be a

[1] There is a reference to him in the *Paradiso*, xii. 124–6:

> ma non fia da Casal, nè d'Acquasparta,
> là onde vegnon tali alla scrittura,
> che l'un la fugge e l'altro la coarta,

i.e. some might be found who really observed the rule of St. Francis, but such would come neither from Casale, where Ubertino had enforced it with fanatical rigour, nor from Acquasparta, where Cardinal Matteo, the General of the Order, had relaxed it. Tocco, *L'Eresia nel Medio Evo*, p. 503.

serious and suggestive truth, that as there was a period when men groped for God if haply they might find Him, and a period, in the fullness of time, when God was manifest in the flesh, there will also be a final period when the Spirit of God will rule the hearts of all men in righteousness and peace and joy.

# X

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE EUCHARIST

The Fathers using to speak rhetorically brought up Transubstantiation. That opinion is only Rhetorick turn'd into Logick.

Selden, *Table Talk*, p. 176.

# X

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE EUCHARIST

THERE are few things in the record of the Christian Church which offer a more melancholy retrospect than the history of sacramental doctrine. The Eucharist, which in its very nature is an act of fellowship, has become the most rigid factor in the separation of Christian communities, and every reconciling effort becomes fruitless at that point, ultimately, as we believe, because it is a point at which two absolutely irreconcilable conceptions of religion reach a signal test.

Much that is written in these days upon the subject of the Sacraments, from every side, is written with an eirenical motive. Now one must respect any effort that looks toward mutual understanding between different communions, and that makes for unity. But with all regard for such worthy motives, we cannot but feel that the first interest is truth, and that even if agreement could be reached by mutual concessions, and by arriving at some adroit formula which everyone might accept, while each interpreted it in his own way, such a unity would be utterly unreal, and have in it no element of permanence. The history of the Council of Florence has its lessons for to-day, when union is in the air. The plain fact is that there are two ultimate views of the Sacraments, and they cannot be reconciled, because they depend in the last resort

on utterly different conceptions of what Christianity is. A version of religion in which the emphasis is on ecclesiastical ritual, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and the authority of the corporate Church, simply cannot be reconciled with another version in which the emphasis is on spiritual life, spiritual fellowship, and the authority of personal experience. The attempt to reconcile them, in spite of worthy motives and dialectical skill, really results (to speak plainly) in a kind of intellectual hypocrisy.

A study of the Eucharistic doctrine of the Fathers reveals the fact that there were, from early days, two opposed strains of belief and teaching. It would be easy to quote passages in favour both of the magical and materialist view, on the one hand, and of the symbolical and spiritual interpretation, on the other. A good example of the existence of both strains in one man may be found in St. Augustine, who could warn his readers against a literal interpretation of Christ's words, and could say, in expounding John vi. 29–53, 'Why make ready the teeth and the belly? Believe, and thou hast eaten!' (*crede et manducasti*) and yet himself believed that diseased eyes could be healed by the touch of the sacramental bread.

The matter is also complicated by the natural use of devotional and rhetorical language by the Fathers. Much of this, if taken *au pied de la lettre*, favours the grosser view, but it is not fair to take it all in that sense, any more than it would be to interpret literally the devotional language of many Sacramental hymns in use among Protestants. Moreover, as Strauss once shrewdly pointed out, the separation of symbol and

fact had hardly come about in those early days, and probably every doctrine of the Sacraments that has been held in later times would have appeared unintelligible and unsatisfactory in the first centuries of the Church, simply because the intellectual implications had not been worked out—a remark that applies to much more than Sacramental doctrine.

But it is certain that, as Seeberg has said, there were two elements which from the beginning concurred in the construction of the doctrine of the Mass, 'the materializing of grace, and the hierarchical conception of the Church.'[1] The student of the history of doctrine can watch, from the second century down to the Middle Ages, the melancholy process of the mechanization of the Sacraments and the sacerdotalization of the ministry. Very largely it was a matter of pagan conceptions of the mysteries and the priesthood creeping back into the Church, and despiritualizing the religion of Christ.

The process reached its climax between the eighth and the eleventh centuries. The most memorable date is 831, when Paschasius Radbertus, the abbot of the great monastery of Corvey, wrote his book on the Eucharist, *De sacramento corporis et sanguinis Christi*, which practically teaches a full-fledged Transubstantiation. It did not pass without opposition. The monk Frudegard quoted passages of Augustine against him, and Paschasius was compelled to admit

[1] Zwei Motive haben von Anfang an zu ihrer Herstellung (i.e. the Catholic doctrine of the Sacraments) concurrirt, die Materialisirung der Gnade und der hierarchische Kirchenbegriff. Die Sakramente strömen die Gnade ein, aber die Priester machen die Sakramente. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, ii, p. 126.

that there were many teachers of the Church who did not accept his view. Rabanus Maurus, one of the leading scholars of the age, regarded the language of Paschasius as offensive. Erigena, by far the greatest man of that time, wrote a book in answer to the new doctrine, which is lost. But we know that the Scot's position was that the Eucharist is 'a memorial,' 'a similitude,' and (in language that proves at once his own spiritual view and the grossness of the belief that he opposed) that Christ is 'spiritually sacrificed and eaten in the soul, not with the teeth' (*mente, non dente, comedimus*). The almost contemporary work of Ratramnus of Corvey (long believed to be by Erigena) also takes a spiritual view of the Eucharist, and regards it as a figure, a sign (*figura, signum*) of the death of Christ. Two hundred years later the more spiritual view was not quite extinct, for Berengar of Tours taught it, probably influenced by what he had read of Erigena and of Ratramnus. He was opposed by Lanfranc at a Synod in Rome, and excommunicated in 1050. Four years later, through the good offices of Hildebrand, Berengar managed to satisfy a Council at Tours with a statement in general terms. But he had to go to Rome again in 1059, and there he was compelled to sign a retractation and confession drawn up by Cardinal Gumbert which probably marks the lowest point of grossness in the history of the doctrine. The really horrifying language of this document runs: 'The bread and wine which are placed upon the altar, after consecration, are not merely a sacrament, but the very body and blood of our Lord, and are *sensibly, not merely in a sacrament, but in verity, handled by the*

*hands of the priest, and broken and ground by the teeth of the faithful'* (*sensualiter non solum sacramento, sed in veritate manibus sacerdotum tractari; et frangi et fidelium dentibus atteri*). After Berengar had got back to France he recanted his recantation, and called the doctrine of Paschasius a *verecordia vulgi*.

Now Catholics may repudiate as much as they like a materialistic interpretation of the dogma, and declare, like Newman, that our Lord's presence in the elements is 'substantial, spirit-wise, sacramental, an absolute mystery.'[1] But there is no escaping the facts of history, and the facts are that it was this gross and materialist conception that had established itself in the earlier Middle Ages, and that the doctrine of Transubstantiation, as Catholics accept it to-day, is the attempt to refine and rationalize that gross belief, in terms of scholastic philosophy. The scholastics set themselves to explain an established belief as to a material reception of the Lord's Body in the Eucharist, and they explained it in terms of substance and accidents. The accidents remained—for no one could altogether deny the evidence of the senses; the substance was changed—for that was the only possible theory on which a materialist doctrine could be defended, and at the same time as far as possible dematerialized. If you believe that there is a change in the matter of the elements, and cannot say that the externality is changed, because it is obvious that it is not, you must say that it is the internality that is changed, the unapparent, underlying substance of the matter.

[1] *The Via Media of the Anglican Church*, ii, p. 220.

It seems an amazing thing that many apologists for sacerdotalism can disregard so completely the history of superstition that has accumulated around a sacerdotal view of the Eucharist. Is it insignificant that for centuries a huge mass of superstitions and blasphemous beliefs and practices gathered about the Mass?—that through long ages millions of men made of it a mere idolatry? It is indeed true that the abuse of anything does not destroy its real value, but the fact of the abuse should at least warn us that there is a danger to be guarded against and an extreme to be avoided. There is ample justification in the history of the Middle Ages, and in the Roman Catholic Church to-day, for such an expression as Browning puts into the mouth of the dying Bishop, when he is thinking of his tomb at St. Praxed's:

> And hear the blessed mutter of the Mass,
> And see God made and eaten all day long,

and for such a protest as that of John Knox against 'a God of bread that might be devoured by any bold and puissant mouse.' One has only to recall the numberless examples of 'bleeding Hosts' in the Middle Ages, and to remember that Nicholas of Cusa, papal legate as he was, struggled his hardest, and struggled in vain, to put down the superstition in one particular case, to realize what the belief in Transubstantiation meant in the popular mind. When such dreadful grossness has been allied with a doctrine, it irresistibly suggests itself that there must be (despite all sorts of subtle theological qualifications) a materialistic quality in the doctrine itself. Strauss enunciated

a great principle when he said that the real criticism of dogma is its history, and, one would want to add, the history of its devotional and practical results, as well as of its purely intellectual development. Our thoughts of any sacramental doctrine cannot be dissociated from its large consequences in the life and experience of men, in the past and in the present.

But if we disregard the history of the past, and study the doctrine of Transubstantiation as held by Catholics to-day on its own intellectual merits, we see that it really amounts to a scheme of perpetually recurring miracle. Every time the Host is consecrated a supernatural event occurs—a miracle, in the strict sense of the word. Yet it is not a miracle like any other miracle, that is to say, an event obvious to the senses but not amenable to explanation on ordinary lines of experience. It is not obvious to the senses at all, but you are required to believe that, though there is no sensible evidence of it whatever, a miracle has occurred. At this point, and in this sense, the issue has surely ceased to be one of sacramental doctrine at all, and has become a question as to the possibility of the supernatural and as to the authority of the Church. The Catholic doctrine of the Sacraments may be right or may be wrong, but whether we believe it or not certainly does not depend, in the last resort, on what we feel is or ought to be the truth about the Sacraments, but on our general attitude both toward the miraculous and toward ecclesiastical authority. The doctrine of Transubstantiation is logical enough if the whole Catholic scheme be accepted. If that Church possesses supernatural powers it can doubtless work an unapparent miracle, and if that

Church possesses infallible authority it has the right to require the faithful to believe that it does so.

But this logical consistency, such as it is, is certainly lost by sacerdotalists who do not occupy the Roman position, that is to say, those who teach that there is a change in the elements, but do not also teach that the change is a pure miracle, to be accepted on the authority of an infallible Church. A number of Anglicans seem to hold that there is some kind of change in the elements, though it is most difficult to make out from their expositions what the change is. Is it a spiritual change? We doubt whether it is possible to conceive a spiritual change in a material thing, unless the change is an absolute transformation—that is, unless the material thing is thought of as passing out of the region of the material altogether, losing all its material qualities and becoming wholly spiritualized. But no one thinks of the Eucharist in this way. The material elements are obviously there, and so Catholics have to say that the senses are deceived—*sanguis Christi merum, etsi sensus deficit*[1]—that there is the sensible presence of material accidents without the material substance.

Then what kind of a spiritual change is it that is wrought in the material elements, which still remain, at least in some sense, material? It is a counsel of despair to say, as sacerdotalist theologians do very often say, that it is an inexpressible mystery. Doubtless there are such mysteries in religion, but these are always where the finite reaches out into the infinite—where, on a basis of actual experience, you are led irresistibly to pass beyond anything which can be

[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Pange, lingua, gloriosi.*

verified by the senses or expressed in language. Thus, if there be any truth in religion at all, we have an actual experience of God as He has been pleased to reveal Himself to us, but it is plain that the whole fact of God is not within our experience, and that therefore the whole truth about God must utterly surpass all our powers of speech and of thought. All our conceptions of God pass out into unspeakable mysteries, because here finite minds are pursuing thoughts of the infinite. But there are surely no gratuitous and arbitrary mysteries in religion. The genuine mysteries only surpass experience and reason because they are, so to speak, at the infinite end of what, at the finite end, is a matter of reason and experience. Now if the change in the eucharistic elements is said to be a mystery beyond reason, where, in this case, is the warrant for such a flight into the unknown? If it be argued that the infinite and inexpressible element arises because we are concerned with the presence of God in the rite, then we are back at the real issue. In what sense is there a special presence of God there? The phrase, 'the real presence,' has become one of the watchwords of the controversy. What precisely does it mean? If it has any meaning at all, it must mean that there is a presence of Christ in the Eucharist more real than the presence which He promised to all who worship Him. Any one who believes the words of our Lord must believe that He is really present with every group of men that worships Him in sincerity, nay, with every lonely soul that seeks Him in secret. Is it suggested—it must be, or the phrase is meaningless—that there is a presence of Christ more real than this,

and that it is mediated and guaranteed in the elements, when properly administered? That, one would think, is a very perverse anomaly for any spiritually minded man to accept. It means that there is a special presence of Christ, conditioned by the use of bread and wine, and the utterance of certain words by certain persons—a presence which is more special, more real, than would be normally granted otherwise to the most sincere desire, the deepest repentance, the strongest faith. No doubt a moving rite like the Eucharist, celebrated in the midst of a fellowship of the faithful, may condition our receptivity and therefore our realization of the presence of God, but that is an immensely different thing from saying that it conditions the fact of the presence of God.

Between the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation and the Zwinglian doctrine that the Eucharist is a symbol, there appears to be no possible position that can be held by those who take the evangelical view of religion. For all the varieties of intermediate doctrine really amount to something like this—that there is in the Eucharist, depending in some way on the use of bread and wine and a formula of consecration, a special presence of Christ, in some sense specially guaranteed, localized, or actualized, which is not vouchsafed otherwise, at least in normal conditions. Now this means, however it may be qualified, that this special presence of Christ does in some way depend upon 'the use of particular material media, without which there is no guarantee of spiritual experience,' as Dr. Ryder Smith once expressed it. Such a view we take to be absolutely incompatible with

a really spiritual conception of religion—that is to say, a conception of religion that has escaped all magical traditions, and has been moralized throughout.

The mere fact is that any conception of the Sacraments which makes them more than symbols is less than moral, because it makes the conferment of grace an arbitrary act on the part of God, in the sense that it is arbitrarily linked up with circumstances and conditions that have not in themselves any moral or spiritual quality. If God requires of us penitence and faith it is not an arbitrary requirement, because these are spiritual qualities which condition the receptiveness of the spirit: it is only the repentant and believing soul that can receive the grace of God. But if God requires the use of material things in a particular way, He requires them arbitrarily as a mere whim of omnipotence: there is no organic connexion between the things required and the grace bestowed; there is no moral or spiritual necessity why God should require them. He might equally well have required the use of other media in another fashion, and there is no reason in the requirement at all: it is merely the arbitrary requirement of an irresponsible authority.

It is only expressing this truth in another and a more positive way to say that if we think aright of God as Love, He must be always and everywhere seeking to impart Himself to the spirits He has created and redeemed. Here is a spiritual principle of the deepest significance and of the widest application, which condemns Sacerdotalism at one extreme, exactly as it condemns Predestinarianism at the other. For if it is the will of God to give Himself to all who will to

receive Him, the only reason why any man is lost is that he will not accept the gift of God, and there is an end of the horrible notion of reprobation. Similarly, if it is the will of God to impart Himself at every time, in every place, in every way, the only reason why we realize His presence more on one occasion than another is a difference in our spiritual receptiveness, and there is an end of the whole conception of sacerdotalism. The sense—the only sense—in which there is a special presence of God anywhere or at any time is that at particular times and under particular conditions the presence of God is specially realized. It is true enough that a particular rite may help us toward that special realization, but that is a very different thing from saying that a special presence of God inheres in that rite.

A great deal that is written by Catholics and Anglicans in defence of extreme sacramental views is entirely beside the point. Much that is said by such writers as to a sacramental principle penetrating all existence can be heartily accepted by the most convinced evangelical. If we believe in God at all, and much more if we believe in God manifest in the flesh, we shall be ready to see all things as symbols and sacraments of spiritual reality. All the things of sense must be, to the religiously minded man, shadows and suggestions of the eternal world. But this, while a profound and beautiful truth, is no asset to the sacerdotalist. For he is not really concerned to see all things as sacramental, but only one or two particular things, and in so far as he holds these to be sacramental, he denies that other things are, or that they are in the

same sense and to the same extent. And so the issue continually recurs—in what special sense, and to what special extent, does the sacerdotalist regard the elements in the Eucharist as sacramental? How, and how far, does he believe that they differ from any and every other symbol?

It is impossible to understand the history of religion in the world until we recognize the fact that there is deeply seated in ordinary humanity a distrust of the purely spiritual, which seems subtle and subjective, and a desire for what appears to be a firmer grasp of reality through the senses. This manifests itself in many ways, and here again extremes meet. The extreme sacerdotalist wants the Eucharist to be more than a sacred rite expressing the presence of Christ; it must not merely signify, but *be* that presence, in some literal sense. The extreme evangelical wants the Bible to be more than a sacred literature recording the revelation of God; it must not merely contain, but *be* that revelation, in some literal sense. The one wants to say, This broken bread *is* the very Body of Christ which was crucified for us. The other wants to say, This printed book *is* the very Word of God written by His finger. It is hardly too much to say that the history of Christian doctrine is the record of the long struggle on the part of the spiritual conceptions of original Christianity, to maintain themselves against this persistent preference of human nature for taking everything in a gross, literal, and mechanical way.

It may be quite plainly and quite sincerely said that the evangelical is not in the least concerned to deny the unique sanctity of the Eucharist. That it has in

itself an appealing beauty ; that it derives a special and solitary significance from its solemn origin ; that it has been hallowed afresh by the long tradition of the centuries ; that it links the whole fellowship of believers throughout the world and throughout the ages together in a devout remembrance of the Lord's Death, of which it is the most vivid and the most touching symbol that could possibly be conceived—all this every evangelical believer will reverently and thankfully acknowledge. But there is a deep, vital, and irreconcilable difference between a view like this, in which the bread and wine are a symbol, a figure, a memorial, and any view in which the bread and wine are in some way unique media by which a unique presence of Christ is actualized and guaranteed. A sacramental doctrine of the latter kind, however subtly qualified in its expression, does inevitably come to mean in the last resort, as it seems to us, something magical and materialistic, and therefore less than Christian.

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